

AUTUMN 1957

Three Shillings and Sixpence

SIGHT AND SOUND

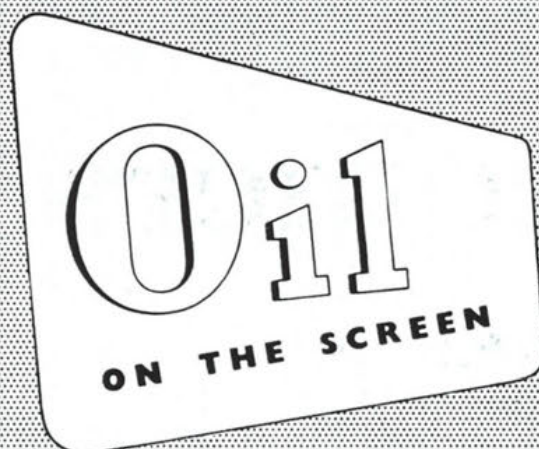
The Film Quarterly



THE NEW EXPLORERS

In this film of the world exploration for oil no oil is found. It is not a success story. It makes no statement of facts and figures, but through the speech and work of many people in different countries, gives an impression of the tremendous effort and hazards met in oil exploration.

The film consists of a number of episodes shot in the Persian Gulf, Canada, Zanzibar, Papua, Trinidad and Sicily. In each location a different aspect of the story of the long search for oil unfolds.



Three



'FOOTHOLD ON ANTARCTICA'

In the winter of 1957/58 The Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, led by Dr. Fuchs, is attempting to cross the Antarctic Continent, a distance of over 2,000 miles.

As a preliminary to this great adventure, the Expedition made a visit to the Weddell Sea to establish a base camp in advance of the main party's arrival. This film, commissioned by The British Petroleum Company as part of their contribution to the Expedition, is a record of that preliminary journey.

The m/v "THERON" left London on 14th November 1955. Over five weeks later she first met the ice of the Weddell Sea. Breaking through after a month's delay Theron made landfall at the southern end of the Weddell Sea on the last day of January, 1956. Here, Shackleton Base was established but after eight days the early approach of winter forced Theron to leave. A party of eight stayed behind to build camp and, the following Spring, to reconnoitre the interior before the main expedition arrived.





WE FOUND A VALLEY

This film was shot against a background of the construction of the new British Petroleum Company refinery at Little Aden. A site was chosen in November 1952 in a desert valley 26 miles west of Aden itself and the refinery was completed approximately eighteen months later. The film tells the story of the finding of the valley, of the great engineering achievement itself, and of the immense difficulties and local hazards which were encountered. It also attempts to give a human background to its main theme by showing the impact of the project on this remote corner of Arabia.



fine newcomers

to **'OIL ON THE SCREEN'**

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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 27 No. 2 AUTUMN 1957

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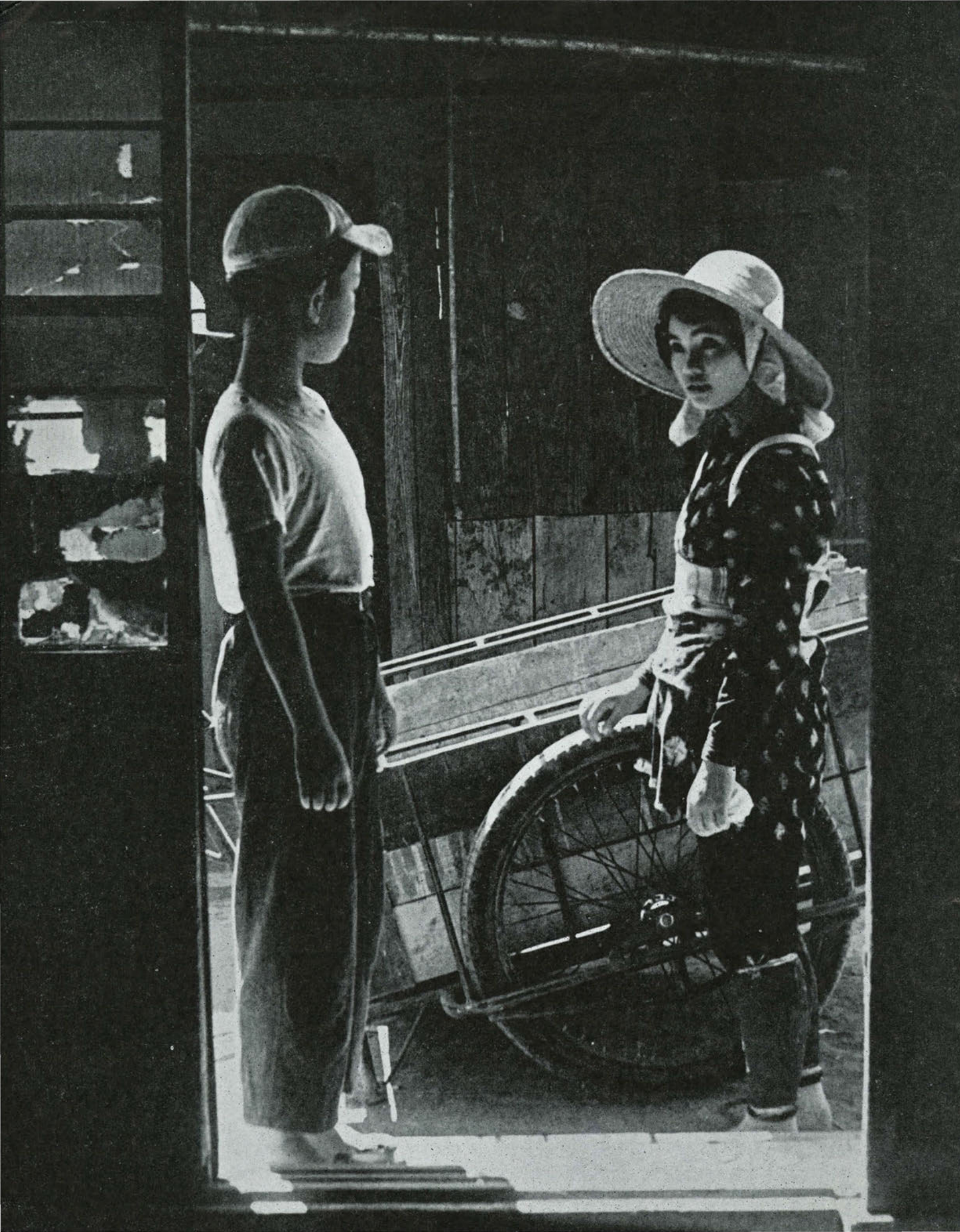
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THE FRONT PAGE

IN this country, in any development concerning the arts, the transition from idea to reality is seldom made hastily. The National Theatre, in particular, has for years remained no more than an unrealised ideal. In the case of the National Film Theatre, however, the reality may be said almost to have preceded the idea. When the National Film Theatre first opened, in October, 1952, it remained for its operation to define its scope and intentions. For five years this cinema, originally the Telekinema built for the 1951 Festival of Britain and primarily for the showing of 3-dimensional films, has housed an essentially experimental project that has had to prove its way; and since irony seems to figure largely in most aspects of the cinema's history, it is not inappropriate that the building itself should initially have existed as a show-place for 3-D, the most ephemeral of all the cinema's innovations. The cinema which Princess Margaret is to open later this month, takes the National Film Theatre from the field of innovation to that of permanent reality. We now know, more or less, what we conceive the function of a National Film Theatre to be.

To begin with, its title goes some distance towards defining its purpose. The Cinémathèque in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and other film archives around the world, have cinemas and regard it as part of their function to show as well as to preserve films. They put on more or less out-of-the-way pictures for the interested minority. This, though, cannot be the entire job of a cinema describing itself as national; and in fact the National Film Theatre's policy has always been one of adventure and initiation as well as of revival. For its material, it has searched the world. The final season at the old theatre is one of Yugoslav films; the first two programmes at the new theatre will be an international festival (organised in collaboration by the *Sunday Times* and the British Film Institute) and a season of films from Japan.

In this, the theatre follows a policy similar to that of this magazine. There are those who would prefer both the National Film Theatre and SIGHT AND SOUND to be rather more insular, who believe that concentration on the familiar and known is more valuable than a search for the remote and esoteric. We believe, though, that this is to misunderstand the nature of the cinema. A National Theatre might be able to exist for quite a while on a diet of Shakespeare and Sheridan and Shaw; but a National Film Theatre cannot subsist on revivals and rediscoveries, however important a part they rightly play in its programme.

Rather, the theatre exists to provide a centre—to give the Free Cinema group, for instance, its necessary platform; to stage, as it is doing this month, an international

festival; to provide, through its clubrooms, a meeting-ground for discussion. As a non-profit-making concern, it can initiate and experiment, can take risks impracticable for the commercial or even the specialised cinemas. Here it most notably supplements the ordinary structure of cinema exhibition in this country. In its first five years, the National Film Theatre has given an initial showing to many pictures which have gone on to be more or less commercially successful. Like the little theatres, it can act as a testing-ground for box-office reactions. In spite of a theatre membership of over 30,000, it can never invade the territory of the Odeons, and is likely to be helpful to the Academies and Curzons and Classics.

That the National Film Theatre essentially attracts a minority public does not clash, however, with its claim to be regarded as national. It derives its right to the title from the range and calibre of its activities rather than the size of its audience. It would be misguided for the theatre wholly to ignore the commercial cinema, to show no films likely to be encountered in the public cinemas, to cut itself off from the greater part of the cinema's output. It would be equally shortsighted for it to function only as a kind of superior repertory theatre. By combining different elements, varying its programmes, taking its seasons from national cinemas (Germany, Japan), from the big commercial companies (The Rank Organisation, Warner Brothers) and from the non-commercial field (Free Cinema, the French documentary cinema), it in fact fulfils a unique function.

The new theatre itself has come into existence through a characteristic variety of financial support. The building is provided by the L.C.C. and leased to the British Film Institute; money for equipment and furnishings has been raised through an appeal to members of the Institute, to the film trade, and to some public organisations. The film industry has given generous support, as it did towards the establishment of the first theatre, thereby recognising its potential.

At a time when cinemas everywhere are closing down, when the combined effects of entertainments tax, competition from television and changes in public taste and habits are presenting the major circuits with an acute problem, a movement like the National Film Theatre can still hope to advance. As audiences become more selective, more genuinely interested in the film as such, we are going to see some significant changes in the whole pattern of cinema-going. Increasingly, the film will draw a public who regard it as more than an evening's easy diversion—television, after all, can give them that. If the cinema as a whole needs these audiences, they in turn need a National Film Theatre.

In the Picture

Cinémas d'Essai

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: Three years ago, speaking to a group of journalists on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, Jean Renoir put forward some ideas about the significant films of the future. They would, he suggested, be low-budget productions, made on a semi-amateur basis, and would be able to recover their production costs quickly through showings in specialised cinemas throughout the world. He quoted as an example *The Little Fugitive*, made and distributed quite outside the usual Hollywood channels. In France, we have since then had *La Pointe Courte*, written and produced for £12,000 by Agnes Varda, a young photographer working with the Theatre National Populaire. (The TNP also provided her with two of its best actors, Sylvia Montfort and Philippe Noiret.) The film is now getting wide distribution in the specialised cinemas of Germany and Belgium, and will soon have recovered its initial costs.

It should also be remembered that *La Casa del Angel*, the Argentinian film which attracted so much notice at Cannes, cost only £15,000; that *Rekāvā*, from Ceylon, cost about £10,000. It ought to be possible to make films cheaply; and one would like to see in each country a sort of independent sector of production, where film-makers wanting to make this kind of picture would not be hampered by the regulations about the employment of technicians laid down by the unions. But the other side of the problem—the question of distribution—is equally important. Apart from the official festival, Cannes this year saw the birth of the Confédération Internationale des Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai (C.I.C.A.E.), whose aim is to make possible the establishment of a world-wide cinema chain for exhibition of the type of film rejected by the big commercial circuits.

Comprising representatives from six countries (France, Britain, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland), this organisation proposes to work through UNESCO to obtain greater freedom for the circulation of films between countries and to facilitate the distribution among its members of films chosen by the organising committee. Sixty cinemas are already operating in Germany on this basis and a dozen in Paris; only two cinemas in Britain, the Hampstead Everyman and the Arts Cinema at Cambridge, have so far agreed to collaborate.

In France itself, it is proposed shortly to extend the activities of the Cinémas d'Art et d'Essai in the provinces; and about thirty cinemas are at present under consideration. Films which have previously had little chance of general distribution should thus be guaranteed a showing throughout the country. In Paris itself, there has been a great advance in the specialised cinema movement during the last ten years, some of them extending their activities to include regular discussion meetings and exhibitions. Even so, works such as *Pather Panchali* have still to find a Paris cinema.

It is obvious that a certain amount of propagandist work is needed from the enlightened amateurs of the cinema; and that people prepared to support this ambitious project must make some critical and constructive effort if it is to succeed. A good film from any country, costing perhaps £20,000, should then easily cover its costs through showings in Western Europe. (The Iron Curtain countries at the moment reject any form of collaboration, maintaining that the films shown in their ordinary cinemas are all "cultural".)

The first C.I.C.A.E. Conference, held at Cannes last May, ended with a showing of some of the British Free Cinema films. A permanent office in Paris (8 Rue d'Athènes, Paris 9e.) acts as a co-ordinating centre for the member countries. The C.I.C.A.E. proposes to view, and eventually arrange distribution for, films of real artistic merit. But the tastes of specialised cinema managers will largely depend on those of the audiences prepared to patronise them.

Spanish Notes

FRANCISCO ARANDA writes: The two best-known of Spain's younger directors, L. G. Berlanga and J. A. Bardem, have both recently been active. The story of Berlanga's *Los Jueves, Milagro* (On Thursdays, a Miracle) is a sad one. Berlanga's script was accepted, with some alterations, by the Catholic institution "Opus Dei", as a defence of orthodox Catholicism against the abuses of the traffic in miraculous happenings. But after the film's completion, he was compelled to re-shoot part of it and to make dialogue changes. Following these amendments, the film was given by the Spanish and Italian co-producers to cutters not previously engaged on the production, who substantially re-edited it. But Berlanga's name still remains on the film, which had its première in Madrid last summer. J. A. Bardem's latest subject, *Los Segadores*, a story of the wheat harvesters who travel to the north of Aragon (the province of Huesca) in the heat of summer, was approved by the censor without alterations. He was merely asked to include an introductory note stating that this devastating analysis of poverty among the agricultural workers corresponded to the conditions of 1930, not those of 1957.

Now that Spain has established a standard in the feature film, some of the younger film-makers are trying to do the same in the documentary field. Alain Resnais has been called in recently to direct a long documentary, *El Greco y Toledo*; Jose Val del Obar has completed an interesting, semi-experimental film on Granada; *Agua, Espejo Granadino*; and Eduardo Ducau has made *Carta de Sanabria*, shot in villages of the region of Zamora and the first polemical social documentary to be produced in Spain for eighteen years.

Luis Bunuel's projects for filming two further subjects in France, *La Femme et le Pantin* and *Thérèse Etienne*, seem to have fallen through. *Thérèse Etienne* will now be made by Denys de la Patellière, and Bunuel's next film is likely to be *La Fièvre Monte à El Pao*, a Franco-Mexican co-production. It is still reported that he intends making a screen version of Evelyn Waugh's macabre and satirical romance *The Loved One*, with Alec Guinness.

Silvana Mangano and Jo Van Fleet in René Clément's "The Sea Wall", filmed partly in Thailand.





Stanley Kubrick (left) and Kirk Douglas on the set of Kubrick's new film, "Paths of Glory", adapted from a novel about the first World War.

Work in Progress

Great Britain

ANTHONY ASQUITH: *Orders to Kill*, a war story about a young pilot entrusted with a secret service mission, with script by Paul Dehn. Lillian Gish plays her first British screen part since *Hearts of the World* (1919); also Paul Massie, Eddie Albert, Irene Worth. (Lynx Productions)

JOHN FORD: *Gideon's Day*, a story about a Scotland Yard superintendent from a novel by J. J. Marric and script by T. E. B. Clarke. With Jack Hawkins and Anna Lee. (Columbia)

LEWIS GILBERT: *Carve Her Name With Pride*, with Virginia McKenna as a war heroine who died in a Nazi concentration camp. (Rank)

JOSEPH LOSEY: *The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, a period romance with Keith Michell and Melina Mercouri. (Rank)

CAROL REED: *Stella*, a sea story of the war, with William Holden, Trevor Howard and Sophia Loren, for Carl Foreman's independent company. (Open Road for Columbia Release)

RALPH THOMAS: *A Tale of Two Cities*, with Dorothy Tutin and Dirk Bogarde. (Rank)

U.S.A.

RICHARD BROOKS: *The Brothers Karamazov*, after Dostoevski; with Claire Bloom, Maria Schell, Yul Brynner, Richard Basehart. (Avon for MGM release)

VINCENTE MINNELLI: *Gigi*, a musical adaptation of Colette's novel, with Leslie Caron, Maurice Chevalier, Hermione Gingold, Louis Jourdan. (Arthur Freed for MGM release)

ORSON WELLES: *Badge of Evil*, thriller with a Mexican setting; with Welles, Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh and guest appearance by Marlene Dietrich. (Universal-International)

WILLIAM WYLER: *The Big Country*, a pioneering Western with

Gregory Peck, Jean Simmons, Carroll Baker. (Anthony Productions for United Artists release)

FRED ZINNEMANN: *The Nun's Story*, from a bestseller by Kathryn Hulme, with Audrey Hepburn. (Fox)

France

ALEXANDRE ASTRUC: *Une Vie*, adapted by Astruc and Roland Laudenbach from de Maupassant's novel. With Maria Schell and Christian Marquant and photography (CinemaScope and Eastman Colour) by Claude Renoir.

JEAN ANOUILH: *Mademoiselle Molière*, from a script by Anouilh and Roland Laudenbach, with François Périer and Catherine Anouilh.

ROBERT BRESSON: *Lancelot du Lac*, from his own script and with a cast of non-professionals.

Italy

ALDO FABRIZI: *Il Maestro*, an Italo-Spanish co-production, to be shot in Madrid with Fabrizi in the leading role.

FRANCO ROSSI: *Le Tenere Estate*, with Walter Chiari; also Italo-Spanish and to be made in Madrid.

LUIGI ZAMPA: *La Ragazza del Palio*, with Diana Dors and Vittorio Gassmann.

U.S.S.R.

ALEXANDROV: *Russian Souvenir*, an international musical; then a reissue of *October*, possibly with music by André Volkonski, to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution; and the completion, with Tissé, of Eisenstein's Mexican film. (Mosfilm)

IVAN PIRIEFF: *Nastasia Philipovna*, a new version of *The Idiot*. (Mosfilm)

G. ROSHAL: *The Road to Calvary*, from the book by A. N. Tolstoi, to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution. (Mosfilm)

Documentary Citations at Venice

JOHN MADDISON (who served on the Jury of this year's Festival of Documentaries and Shorts at Venice) writes:—

For me, the most interesting part of adjudicating with colleagues from Poland (Jerzy Toeplitz, the admirable Chairman), France (Henry Gruel), U.S.A. (Gene Moskowitz) and Italy (Folco Quilici) was the hours spent on the final day in animated discussion and in seeking to crystallize our reasons for giving each prize, in a brief citation. I think I am betraying no secrets when I say that some films were sentenced out of hand—prosaic and interminable and, a common fault, saddled with profoundly depressing musical tracks.

But our final choice did suggest that as good or better work is still going on in this field in many places, than in feature production. There is little one would wish to add to what we actually said, in phrases as lapidary as we could make them. The awards were:—

Grand Prix: *Every Day Except Christmas* (Lindsay Anderson, Great Britain) "for its poetry achieved through realism".

Films on the Arts: *Arthur Honegger* (Georges Rouquier, France) "for an authentic document revealing the personality of a great musician".

Scientific and Technical Films: *Approaching the Speed of Sound* (Peter de Normanville, Great Britain) "for the best specialised film".

Medical Films: *Development of Reflexes in Ontogenesis* (Raitburt, U.S.S.R.) "for a technically difficult and extremely delicate demonstration of the importance of reflexes in the development of the individual".

Surgical Films: *Surgical Correction of Atrial Septal Defects under Hypothermia* (Varossieau and de Vogel, Netherlands) "for its excellent technique and very clear mode of demonstrating a difficult heart operation".

Didactic and Informational Films: *The True Story of the Civil War* (Edward R. Martin, U.S.A.) "for the mastery and intelligence with which it presents a great historical event on the screen".

Animated Cartoons and Puppet Films: *Once Upon a Time* (W. Borowczic, Poland) "for its inventiveness, artistry and humour".

Experimental and Avant-Garde Films: *A Chairy Tale* (Norman McLaren, Canada) "for its research, both artistically and technically, into the comic element in the cinema".

Ethnographical and Geographical Films: *Les Maîtres Fous* (Jean Rouch, France) "for a document of great value in the service of serious research and study".

Diplomas were awarded to *Le Mystère de l'Atelier 15* (Heinrich and Resnais, France), *In the World of Ultrasonics* (B. Sciulin, U.S.S.R.), *Paths of Progress* (Franz Schroedter, Germany), *Les Eaux Souterraines* (H. Tazieff, Belgium), *Our Friend the Atom* (U.S.A.—in the class "Shorts for Television", in which no prize was awarded), *Adventures of . . .* (John Hubley, U.S.A.) and *Pan-Tele-Tron* (Digby Turpin, Great Britain).

Among the films specially mentioned were *Nice Time* (Alain Tanner and Claude Goretta, Great Britain), "for the first creative effort of young film-makers", *A City Decides* (Charles Guggenheim, U.S.A.) "for courageously treating a present-day problem of great importance", and *Journey into Spring* (Ralph Keene, Great Britain) "for its exceptionally fine photography".

The London Film Festival

DEREK PROUSE writes: London, at last, is to have its own Film Festival. Presented by the *Sunday Times* in association with the British Film Institute, it will be the opening event at the New National Film Theatre and will begin on October 16th. The main aim of the Festival will be to bring to London, under the most favourable conditions, the most unusual and adventurous films seen at other European Festivals throughout the year.

The advantages should prove manifold: the public will have a chance to see films whose titles will be mostly familiar to them through the critics' Festival reports; exhibitors will be able to study the reaction to unusual films of a British audience; and for the film-makers, there will be an opportunity to make their work more widely known and bring it directly to the attention of our English public.

The selected films include the three works by new young directors shown at Cannes and illustrated on the centre page of the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*—Torre Nilsson's *House of the Angel*, Jung-Alsen's *Duped Till Doomsday*, Wajda's *Kanal*. From Karlovy Vary an outstanding Hungarian film, *A Sunday Romance* (shown hors festival at Karlovy Vary, the official entry being *Professor Hannibal*). Echoing Ophuls in its elegant nostalgia and light irony, it is the first feature film of Imre Feher, begun before the Revolution and only recently completed.

The Festival's opening film will be perhaps its most remarkable—Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* with Toshiro Mifune as a Japanese Macbeth and Isuzu Yamada as the most spine-chilling, of spouses. The Festival will end with René Clair's *Porte des Lilas*, which marks a return by the French director to the top of his form.

The Festival will fill an important gap in London's film scene. Already it has been welcomed by the trade press and the magazine editors. This is a good start, for on its reception this year will depend the development of its character and general policy.

Momma Don't Allow at Bethnal Green

DEREK HILL writes: John Hall and I are making a 16mm. documentary about the work of St. Hilda's East, a Bethnal Green settlement which serves every age group in the community. Hoping to allay any possible suspicions among the teenagers, we took a copy of Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson's film *Momma Don't Allow* to the youth club, and endeavoured to explain that our approach to their activities would be rather along the lines of this film. We didn't have much chance to explain anything, however. The fifty or so who drifted in to see the film had clearly come for Chris Barber, and didn't intend to listen to anything until he appeared.

The opening sequence of the musicians arriving and tuning up quietened the audience to an appreciative mumble, interrupted by shouts of recognition as the players appeared. They seemed worried at first by the scenes of boys and girls leaving work, with the first number as a background; but the first shot of the handsome young butcher was greeted with a united squeal of delight from the girls. With the arrival at the jazz club, however, all restlessness vanished; and the rest of the film received hushed concentration.

The only interruption to this foot-tapping relish was the arrival of the group of socialites, who provoked prompt and loud derision. The girl's attempts to dance in a flowing stole caused lusty enjoyment; but eventually the attention devoted to these interlopers exasperated the audience. When the group hesitated a moment before getting into their car, one boy exploded, "Go on! Go on! Get out of it!"

Everyone seemed to have enjoyed the film, though. "Didn't see much of Old Lonnie, did we?" was the severest criticism, and one boy complained that "They must have done the music separate—they weren't always dancing in time to it". The most enigmatic comment came from a boy who waited until the rest had gone, and who seemed to think the film was our work.

"Are you two learners, like?"

"Well . . ."

"Film learners, I mean", he explained, patiently.

We agreed that, in a way, we were.

"I thought so", he said with some satisfaction. "It's a very good film for learners".

Alec Guinness in "*Barnacle Bill*" (Ealing), in which he plays a seasick member of a long line of seafarers, and also some of his own ancestors.



From Screen to Screen

CINEMA FILMS ON TELEVISION

BY DUNCAN CROW

AUGUST Bank holiday this year promised two especial pleasures for me. One of these could be of interest only to a few people who play golf and has no place in the present context. But the second pleasure is apposite, for that evening B.B.C. television screened *Love Happy*, the last film in which the Marx Brothers appeared together.

I had been looking forward to seeing this film. It had, I remembered, been banned by the film trade in this country when it was first released in 1950 because Ben Hecht had participated in the script, and I had not managed to see it when it subsequently received a limited showing. The B.B.C. would no doubt have been gratified to know of my anticipation, for the programme planners had obviously intended the film as a Bank Holiday treat, just as the I.T.V. programmers had provided *The Maltese Falcon* as Whit Monday's cream.

But when it came to the point I must confess that I was disappointed. *Love Happy* did not seem to me to match up to the zany brilliance of vintage Marxism. Despite the steaming "soup-bird" (or was it a beverage-bird?), the ride on the oil company's Pegasus, and the glorious

nightmare of the maypole dance, the final chase sequence did not catch the hilarity of the backstage chase in *A Night at the Opera*. Harpo's capacious-pocket joke with its artificial legs, block of ice, and phlegmatic terrier, hardly equalled the sardine-packed cabin scene in—was that in *A Night at the Opera* too, or was it in *A Day at the Races*? Groucho's few wisecracks never rose to the brilliant heights of his earlier aphorisms.

Where lay the fault for this disappointment? Was it myself no longer able to appreciate the logical unreason of the planet of Marx? Was the film itself just a poor palimpsest from the Golden Age? Or was it the method of screening—television?

In this particular instance I am inclined to think—after conducting a sample survey of minimal proportions—that the fault lay with the planet of Marx. When Kenneth Tynan saw the film in a converted church in Paris he reported to *SIGHT AND SOUND* (April 1951) that "as the trade papers say, it fails to please." But what about other instances? Do films always disappoint on television?

This, of course, has now become rather an old argument, but it is worth looking into again, particularly because, as reported in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, A.B.C. Television propose this autumn to regale their Midland and Northern viewers on Saturday nights with a series of Korda films. They are reported to have bought 25 of these for an estimated £50,000, but whether they will show them all, or whether they will confine themselves to what their advertisement calls "the pick of the classics by Alexander Korda, perhaps the best film producer to work in Britain", remains to be seen.

Some critics have deplored the A.B.C.'s intention. Mr. Driberg, for example, regarded it as a "retrograde step to rely at all substantially in (television) programme-building on films made for the cinema." The film trade itself, in the person of the President of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, was inclined to shrug the matter off: "the films are twenty years old at least and they have exhausted their value as film entertainment . . ."

Whatever the feelings of outsiders we may safely presume that A.B.C. television knew what they were doing when they bought the films. Though some of them may be stummers, as is inevitable in a large group, many of them are good films. It is true that even these good ones might not attract queues to a cinema—mainly because the industry has necessarily spent years in indoctrinating the public with the belief that an old film is as dull as yesterday's newspaper and that only the latest release is worth seeing. But they will undoubtedly keep a large part of A.B.C.'s 7½ million audience in front of their sets at 10 o'clock on Saturday nights. As the National Film Theatre has shown, "repertory cinema" has a strong pull, and although only a limited number of people are prepared to pay for admission to an old film, many more are quite happy to watch it and enjoy it when it is shown to them "for free" in their own homes.

My own reaction to the Korda repertory season is that I am only sorry I don't live within range of the A.B.C. transmitter. I admit that a film made for showing on a large screen to a mass audience loses some of its power when it is squeezed on to a small rectangle in one's own sitting-room. I admit that the captions on some of the foreign films become unreadable. I admit that I have



Private eyes on Television: left: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941), a cinema feature shown on television. Right: "The Adventures of Aggie", a TV series broadcast by ATV.

seen many bad films on television. In fact, I admit all the disadvantages—personally, as a general rule, I like seeing films on television. The question is: am I in a minority of one, or are films a popular item in television's programmes?

II

Television in this country screens a considerable amount of filmed material—of the order of one third of its total programme time. Part of this material is specially filmed for television alone; telerecordings of outside broadcasts and plays, news items, background scenes, and telefilms—by which generic title I mean, for example, the *Burns and Allen* show, *I Love Lucy*, *I Married Joan*, *Dragnet*, etc. Part of it is what, for want of a better name, may be called "cinema films", e.g., the Korda films referred to above.

Now, while it may be proper for Mr. Driberg to consider that a two-hour feature film every Saturday constitutes a "substantial" portion of A.B.C.'s seventeen-hour week-end programme, it cannot be said that, at the moment anyway, British television relies at all substantially on cinema films.

In the first six months of this year a total of 64 cinema films were shown on all television channels—a figure which excludes a few short, Western "instalment" films for children, and a number of documentary and instructional films. This is an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ feature films a week—a screening time of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week, which is not considerable compared with the total weekly screening time of B.B.C. and I.T.A. stations. B.B.C. produces about 50 hours a week, excluding any special junketing such as Test Matches, Wimbledon, and ceremonial occasions; and one single commercial station is on the air for about the same length of time. Regional variations, of course, increase the amount of I.T.A.'s screening time.

Over the six-month period cinema films accounted for little more than 3 per cent of British television programmes. As it happened, more than half (39) of the 64 films were shown in the second quarter of the year. To discover something of the characteristics of cinema films on television it is interesting to examine these 39 more closely.

The main users were the commercial stations: only seven of the 39 were screened by the B.B.C. There is probably no justification for drawing any deductions from this fact, but it may be more than coincidental that over the years the use of cinema films in B.B.C. programmes has gradually declined. Thus, for example, in the second quarter of 1950 (when, of course, I.T.A. did not exist) the B.B.C. alone showed 38 films. It is possible that as a television service becomes established and its planners and producers gain more experience, it needs to depend less on the convenience of cinema films for filling up its programmes. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there are regional variations in I.T.A. programmes, and it is therefore probably less than fair to make a direct comparison between the B.B.C. and the commercial stations as an entity.

Turning now to the nationality of the films shown, it may come as a surprise to those who appreciate the dominant place which American films have in British cinemas to learn that only eight of the 39 were American; there was one French picture (*Night Beauties*), and the remainder were British. This was a different distribution from the second quarter of 1950 (to use the same example again) when there were 23 American, 13 British, one Danish and one French. The increase in the number of British films shown is primarily the result of their greater availability, which, in its turn, is the result of a gradually changing attitude on the part of the film industry towards television. This is not to suggest, of course, that any exhibitor in his right mind, when he looks at the statistical connection between falling cinema attendances and crescent televiewing, does not curse his despoiler. But with the coming of I.T.A. and the consequent involvement, through their "support companies", of many of the British film industry's Big Battalions in commercial television, there has been a significant change in the volume and nature of the curses.

This change has not so far had any effect on the standard joke about cinema films on television: their age. Of our specimen 39, the oldest, *Turn of the Tide*, was registered in 1935; the two most recent, *Devil's Point* and *Profile*, were both registered in 1954. Five of the films were registered in the five-year period, 1935-39; eight in

1940-44; 12 in 1945-49; and 14 in 1950-54: an average age of some eight and a half years. These figures will be a surprise to no one, except possibly to the cynics who believe that all cinema films on television are, if not ante-Lumière, at least antediluvian

From here on, we are on rather more equivocal ground in the examination of the 39 films, for having determined their vital statistics we ought really to psychoanalyse their characters. What sort of films are they?

We can start with the easiest one first—*Night Beauties*. Whatever its own individual merits it is illustrative of one facet of cinema films on television. Foreign, other than American, films have only a very limited showing in this country. Their distribution is confined to a number of specialist cinemas and an occasional release on one of the larger circuits. For these foreign films television provides a valuable medium of distribution; not valuable in the financial sense, for television is a poor payer, but valuable in the size of the audience reached. A French film, for example, that gets a television showing has a chance of attracting a larger audience for its one performance than during its whole cinema career in this country. In this way it may help to increase the demand for other films from its own country.

On the whole the standard of foreign films shown on television is high. *Ramuntcho*, *Le Jour se Lève*, *Four Steps in the Clouds*, *Paisa*, and *Bicycle Thieves* are among those I remember seeing.

What of the other 38? Well, there are undoubtedly some elderly films in amongst them which are worth seeing—again, or for the first time, according to the length of one's film experience. *The Maltese Falcon*, *Western Approaches*, *Thunder Rock*, *On Our Merry Way* (because of the James Stewart-Henry Fonda episode), *Of Mice and Men*, *Stand In* (because of Leslie Howard and Joan Blondell), *Turn of the Tide* (because of its historic importance in the British film industry), and no doubt there are two or three more which could be added according to personal taste. As for the rest they include some not-so-good A pictures, some good B pictures, and some others!

With such a disparate selection it is obvious that audience reactions to cinema films shown on television must vary greatly. In general it would appear that they are a fairly popular item, although even the most popular film will not attract as great an audience as, say for instance, the most popular variety programme. A real stinkeroo, however, probably attracts the smallest audience of any item, except possibly the occasional egghead programme. In such cases even I, self-confessed addict of films on television as I am, find it difficult not to wonder what's on the other programme.

Cinema films shown on television:

above: Rex Harrison and Vivien Leigh in "*Storm in a Teacup*" (1937). On the film's re-issue the trade press called it dated, but, 'A Class British production'.

centre: Henry Fonda and James Stewart in "*On Our Merry Way*" (1948). Trade press comment: 'attraction for indulgent patrons'.

below: "*Les Belles de Nuit*" (1953): 'should appeal vastly to audiences who appreciate artistry and sly, sophisticated wit'.



III

For the television programme planner the average cinema film has the dual advantage of convenience and economy. The convenience needs no comment: it is clearly less trouble to run a film than it is to rehearse a play for three weeks and then present it. It is also cheaper. Television, as I have said, is not a good payer for films—that is to say it is not a good payer from the point of view of the producer, although from its own standpoint it probably pays as much as it considers such a type of programme is worth. Some months ago Sir Robert Fraser announced that between £800,000 and £1 million annually was being spent on providing American films for I.T.A. stations; but before anybody starts multiplying eight by four and then dividing £1 million by the answer it should be remembered that most of this money is being spent on the “American-way-of-life” telefilms, the Lucies, Bilkos, and Dragnets. The cinema films appear to receive very little of it.

It is not easy to arrive at even an approximate figure of what television pays for films. The average of £2,000 a picture paid by A.B.C. for the Korda films seems high, though, of course, the films will no doubt receive a repeat showing at some time or other and the screening price will be proportionately less. Clearly too, some of the films are “the pick of the classics” and could command above the average price.

But *what* is the average price? Nobody seems prepared to divulge the information. Whether this reticence is the result of commercial canniness, or whether the television authorities are afraid that the public will demand a refund when it learns how much they are paying for old films, I do not know. From time to time, however, an odd snippet of information leaks out which leads one to believe that it is not more than a few hundred pounds. Only in the limited number of cases where a cinema film is put on as a positive audience attraction, as against a routine programme filler or a stop-gap when an arranged

programme fails to materialise, does the price rise towards the thousand mark. In many more cases it drops well below the few hundreds level.

Whatever the figure it is obvious from the order of magnitude involved that television makes no significant addition to a cinema film producer's revenue. He is still overwhelmingly dependent on the exhibitor. From the exhibitor's point of view a film that has appeared on television has lost its attractions for the box-office and is banned from his cinema. So it is that at the moment television has available to it only those films which are considered to “have exhausted their value as film entertainment.” Fortunately for viewers like myself, opinions differ as to when the state of exhaustion has been reached!

Under present conditions television, so far as films are concerned, is a sort of repertory cinema with a limited choice. To the television programmer films are a useful stand-by rather than an essential attraction. To the film producer, unless of course he is more vitally engaged in making telefilms, television is a handy source of a little extra revenue, but one that has to be tapped with caution. To the distributor it is a useful shop-window through programmes like the B.B.C.'s “Picture Parade”, which televises extracts of new feature films—a programme which, incidentally, was recently under heavy fire from the Association of Independent Cinemas who claimed that the extracts “misrepresented” films and so were harmful to the box-office. To the exhibitor television is anathema.

There have been signs and speeches, however, which indicate that this pattern is not permanent. There is, for example, the development in the United States of the telemeter system, which in August was publicly demonstrated on a closed circuit in New York by the International Telemeter Corporation, a subsidiary of Paramount Pictures. This system, for which approval is

(Continued on page 106)

TAM viewer ratings for cinema films shown in full* on television April-June 1957—London Area

Title	Day of Week	Time	Audience (mills.)	Title	Day of Week	Time	Audience (mills.)
BBC				Heaven is Round the Corner	Sunday	3.00	1.2
Night Beauties	Tuesday	9.20	1.0	House of Blackmail . . .	Friday	10.00	1.5
Of Mice and Men	Tuesday	9.20	1.3	Lady from Lisbon	Sunday	3.30	1.3
On Our Merry Way	Monday	9.15	.9	Maltese Falcon, The . . .	Monday	9.00	1.8
Stand In	Saturday	9.00	1.0	Murder in Reverse	Sunday	3.30	1.3
Sundown	Saturday	9.00	1.5	Red River Range	Saturday	10.45	1.6
Three Husbands	Tuesday	8.45	1.5	Sabotage at Sea	Sunday	3.30	2.1
ITV				Spies of the Air	Sunday	3.30	1.9
Agitator, The	Sunday	3.00	1.3	Spring Song	Sunday	3.30	1.8
Common Touch, The . . .	Sunday	3.00	1.2	They Made Me a Fugitive .	Tuesday	8.30	2.1
Counter Blast	Sunday	10.05	1.0	Thunder Rock	Tuesday	8.30	1.0
Duel Alibi	Sunday	3.00	2.0	Turn of the Tide	Sunday	3.45	1.6
Echo Murders	Saturday	10.45	1.4	Western Approaches . . .	Sunday	10.05	1.7
Ghosts of Berkeley Square .	Saturday	10.45	1.2	Wide Boy	Friday	10.00	1.7
				Woman to Woman	Sunday	10.05	1.6

*A number of films were shown in serial form, in two or three parts.



Masaru Horiuchi's "The Story of the Swan".

THE FESTIVALS

EDINBURGH

VENICE

KARLOVY VARY

"A VINTAGE YEAR" was the general verdict on the Eleventh Edinburgh Film Festival, for even the most blasé film addict could hardly fail to find something to enjoy during these three crowded weeks. More features were shown than ever before and if one discounts those previously reviewed from Cannes—*The Seventh Seal*, *Kanal*, *The 41st*, *Celui Qui Doit Mourir*, *Duped Till Doomsday*—there remained a wide range of interesting material, including works from countries hitherto unrepresented at Edinburgh.

The Festival's slogan—"The Living Cinema"—is generally interpreted as suggesting an awareness of the film's relation to contemporary life, to its joys as well as its sorrows. Few of this year's entries could be accused of lulling their audience into a state of false security, although there was some comedy (including the British *Lucky Jim*) and beauty and repose could still be found in some of the Asian contributions. But the tone was more often one of protest and revolt directed against the corrupt authoritarianism which hounded Fabrice Professor Hannibal, or, on the other hand, the political die-hards who profited from the mass hysteria surrounding the "hero" of Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue). The ambiguous position of Germany was



"City of Gold" (Canada).

also clearly demonstrated when, shortly after Benedek's study of the wartime corruption of youth, *Kinder, Mütter und ein General*, we were given DEFA'S *Incident in Benderath*, a disquieting, if clumsily expounded, view of the resurgence of anti-semitism in West Germany today.

With the films came the delegations, of course, and this year Edinburgh was visited by the kind of talent normally reserved for Cannes and Venice: Patricia Neal, Klara Luchko (Viola in Fried's *Twelfth Night*) and Melina Mercouri. Of the directors, Jules Dassin arrived to find himself the main figure in a controversy involving the Turkish representatives in Edinburgh, who complained about the alleged anti-Turkish bias in *Celui Qui Doit Mourir*. A demonstration was mooted, but Dassin managed to iron out some misunderstandings during a lively Press Conference.

One of the pleasures of Festivals is the appearance, often from the least likely source, of a minor work of considerable distinction. Such a piece was the Korean comedy *Wedding Day* (director, Lee Byung Il), a period fable about an over-ambitious merchant and his clumsy attempts to promote a profitable marriage for his daughter. Possessing some of the wistful, inconsequential charm of Chinese verse, its poetic regard for the countryside and the people amply compensated for some rough edges in the script. (A Japanese medium-length film, *The Story of the Swan*, had a similar lyrical freshness and feeling for the open air.)

A number of other features made strong and, in some cases, slightly comic reference to the American scene. The main Japanese entry, *Champion* (director, Umeji Inoue), was a *de luxe* commercial production, totally unlike the "art" films usually sent to European Festivals, and handled with a technical fluency reminiscent of Michael Curtiz. A novelettish story combined (rather surprisingly) the worlds of boxing and ballet—including a garish Kelly-like production number—the style was determinedly Western and the total effect highly incongruous. But the director's sharp eye for visual detail contributed some pretty effects in the ballet scenes and the colour was always tastefully employed. Echoes of the more old-fashioned type of English and American musicals could be found in the Russian comedy *Carnival*, directed by E. Ryazanov, a riotous anti-bureaucratic romp which, in its way, provided one of the Festival's major surprises. Set in a workers' club during a New Year's party, it lost no opportunity to deflate the arrogant pomposity of the works director and his hide-bound ideas of "culture" and "uplift".

Two feature-length documentaries from India and America attempted to deal visually with that most intractable of subjects, human goodness. *Gotama the Buddha* (producer,

Bimal Roy; director, Rajbans Khanna) provided a slow, loving introduction to Buddhism by means of sculpture, painting and music. Despite an ill-recorded and over-intense commentary, the wonderful beauty of the sculptured figures radiated a kind of spiritual purity rarely encountered in the cinema. Less revealing was Jerome Hill's biography of Albert Schweitzer, a heavily reverent study which never quite succeeded in presenting a fully-rounded portrait of its subject.

The Italian Festival which comprised the main attraction of the third week also coincided with our Press deadline; however, I managed to see three of the six features scheduled to be shown. Fellini's *Notti di Cabiria*, a stimulating yet disappointing work, suggests that its director is in danger of becoming a prisoner of his own myths. Exploring again the theme of human loneliness, Fellini's sharp, personal eye for people and places is again in evidence (the prostitutes' painful visit to the shrine with its vulgar commercial trappings, for instance), but there is something tired and strained in the manner in which he exploits a recurring vein of de Sica-like whimsy. Giulietta Masina, employing the acting style of *La Strada*, occasionally strikes a note of true pathos, although her moments of comic innocence lean too heavily on the styles of Chaplin and Harry Langdon. The fact that one is always conscious of the actress and her mannerisms somehow weakens the compassion and pity that are undoubtedly present in Fellini's conception of the character and which are most evident in the tenderly observed final scene when Cabiria is serenaded by the boys and girls of the town. Mario Monicelli's *Padri e Figli*, a noisy comedy interlinking the lives of five families, has some lively, extrovert acting by a familiar cast of seasoned players. But its main distinction lies in the unsentimental warmth of the scenes between a little boy and his young "uncle", in which yet another Italian child star gives a marvellously accomplished performance. Lattuada's *Guendalina* suffers from hard, relentless direction and accordingly loses much of its potential charm. Though novelettish in tone, its teen-age love-story is developed without the vulgarities often found in films of its type.

Faced with the customary enormous collection of short films, I have space for only a brief catalogue. Too many entries consisted of little more than glorified travel posters; others explored their over-familiar themes (agriculture, handicrafts, sponsored views of overseas development projects) with a tired competence, revealing little bite or personality. Fortunately, there were some worthwhile exceptions. Canada's *City of Gold*, a reconstruction of the Yukon Gold Rush by means of wonderfully vivid period photographs, communicated a rich flavour of social history; Bert Haanstra's *Rembrandt* traces the artist's life through his work, culminating in a beautifully managed series of dissolves from one self-portrait to another; and Charles Eames' *Toccata for Toy Trains* creates a charming fantasy world from a collection of miniature locomotives. Though not one of his more personal works, Franju's CinemaScope study of *Notre Dame* possesses a refined visual beauty and sense of architectural form. Finally, in lighter vein, John Taylor's British Transport film, *Holiday*, takes a slightly malicious look at the pleasures of Blackpool to the raucous accompaniment of the Chris Barber band.

As in the past, Edinburgh provided the forum for the Selznick Awards, the Richard Winnington Award (Bresson's *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*) and the British Film Academy Lecture in which Eric Ambler wittily expounded his views on the relation of the writer to the cinema. There was also another round in the battle against the employment of the "standard wide screen" for Continental and Asian productions. At least two directors expressed their dislike of the "topping and tailing" which resulted and it was indeed a pity that, in many cases, we were not allowed to see all that the celluloid contained. But perhaps next year. . . .

JOHN GILLET

VENICE

THE great question for any festival, one supposes, is the decision to concentrate its attentions on quality or quantity, on the small, hand-picked selection or the general world view of the cinema. The Venice organisers, experimenting recently towards an individual formula, have developed what seems, theoretically at least, a highly workable compromise: a competitive festival restricted to fourteen entries; a limited number of prizes (Grand Prix, second prize and two acting awards); and around this nucleus a wide range of non-competitive programmes, contemporary and retrospective.

The revelation and triumph of this year's Festival has in fact been one among the several retrospective programmes. (These have included tributes to Dovzhenko, Kirsanoff, Ophuls and Dupont, and a series of six programmes on the British cinema—*Shooting Stars*, *Blackmail*, *Song of Ceylon*, etc.—which will later be shown elsewhere in Italy.) The particular revelation, though, has been the Festival's memorial to Kenji Mizoguchi, the Japanese director whom Venice first brought to the attention of the West and who died last year just before he was due to leave for the festival. The occasion has therefore been fitting; and the films have confirmed, if that was necessary, that Mizoguchi was not merely one of Japan's great directors but one of the cinema's major artists. Of the five pictures shown, I was able to see four. All had women as their central characters, and in all of them there was clear and brilliant evidence of his subtle, perceptive understanding of his heroines, his feeling for them as victims but as victims not without their own guilt and responsibility. *Naniwa Elegy* (1936) and *Women of the Night* (1948) are city stories, both ending on a note of qualified hope: the women, struggling to come to terms with the hardships of their world, remain undefeated. *The Fate of Madame Yuki* (1950) and *The Lady of Musashino* (1951) are studies in frustration, the betrayal of love and hope, and both films end in suicide, a sad slipping away from the cruelties of life. Mizoguchi was an artist of sadness but not of despair. His films have an immediate and all-pervasive visual beauty, but behind the melancholy and elegiac poetry of his drab city streets and misty lakeside landscapes one is always conscious of the artist's comment on his world, the sense of pity and regret for lost illusions. *The Lady of Musashino*, in particular, is a study of human relationships as intricate yet condensed as some of the best contemporary Japanese novels.

There was real excitement and discovery in these programmes; and Venice, at least during the first week of the festival, has been somewhat in need of excitement. However rewarding the other presentations may be, the festival will still be judged by the standard of the films in competition. This year, ten films were offered by the competing countries, four invited by the festival; and it is difficult to know precisely how some entries found their way into a festival

which clearly needs the intelligent co-operation and support of the various national organisations if its enterprising policy of a small, high-calibre entry is to succeed.

It was hard, for instance, to believe that Yugoslavia could not find a more stimulating entry than *Samo Ljudi* (*Men Only*), a rather forlorn novelette about a cripple and a blind girl which finally reunites its lovers under a torrent of water at the foot of a huge dam, sacrificing human considerations in the old socialist-realist tradition to hydro-electric power. Mexico's *Los Salvajes* (*The Savages*) comes from a new director, Rafael Baledon, but sustains the Mexican cinema's somewhat unenviable reputation for brutality—whipping scene, rape, slashings and beatings all worked up into an extravagantly over-ripe melodrama. Spain sent *Un Angel Volo Sobre Brooklyn*, directed by Ladislao Vajda and again starring Pablito Calvo. Set, inexplicably, in the Italian district of New York, it tells a tirelessly whimsical story about a grasping landlord (Peter Ustinov) who is transformed into a dog, suffers indignities in this disguise, and finally makes a sentimental return to the world. The British and American entries, *The Story of Esther Costello* and *Something of Value* could scarcely be called distinguished; and it seems a pity that Britain, with only one feature entry, should be represented by the work of an American director and star.

If these films were all more or less disappointing, there was a certain curiosity value in the Japanese *Uraguruma* (translated into American as *The Baby Carriage*). Directed by Tomotaka Tanaka, this has an interesting subject in its story of two students, boy and girl, who take it upon themselves to restore their elders to a sense of duty—the boy's sister has had an affair with the girl's father, and the students' sole concern is for the welfare of their illegitimate child. In its attitude to the relationship between the generations, its emphasis on the power of youth, the film offers an intriguing view of contemporary Japan. Technically, though, it is desperately slow and static.

Confidence was slightly restored by *I Sogni Nel Cassetto* (*Dreams in a Drawer*), which finds Renato Castellani again exploring the territory of his early films, the study of young people (middle-class, on this occasion), coming to their own unconventional terms with the world. His hero and heroine are students who fall in love, marry while the boy is still working for his degree, live in one room at the top of a house owned by three eccentric sisters, and are suddenly overtaken by tragedy when the girl dies in childbirth. Some of the film is happily reminiscent of Castellani's earlier neo-realist comedies—student encounters, an absurd confession scene in a church, meetings with the young couple's baffled parents. But the heroine, Lea Massari, has been encouraged to let charm slip into mannerism, and calculation too often replaces the fine exuberance of *Due Soldi di Speranza* and *E Primavera*. The final intrusion of tragedy on an essentially light-weight subject seems entirely arbitrary; it is interesting to hear that Castellani also shot, but has apparently rejected, an alternative happy ending.

Both Nicholas Ray's *Bitter Victory*, adapted by Ray, Gavin Lambert and René Hardy from the latter's novel, and André Cayatte's *Oeil pour Oeil* tell stories of men in the desert; both achieve their dramatic climax through incidents of extreme savagery; and both feature Curd Jurgens, who gives two inflexibly Germanic performances. Cayatte's film, a brutal and unlikely story of revenge, has force without substance and falls under the weight of its own pretensions. *Bitter Victory*, though more worth-while, is finally not dissimilar. A story of two soldiers, intellectual (Richard Burton) and professional (Jurgens), during the desert war, it strains to make statements about the futility of war and the behaviour of men under pressure, but weakens them



Castellani's "I Sogni Nel Cassetto".

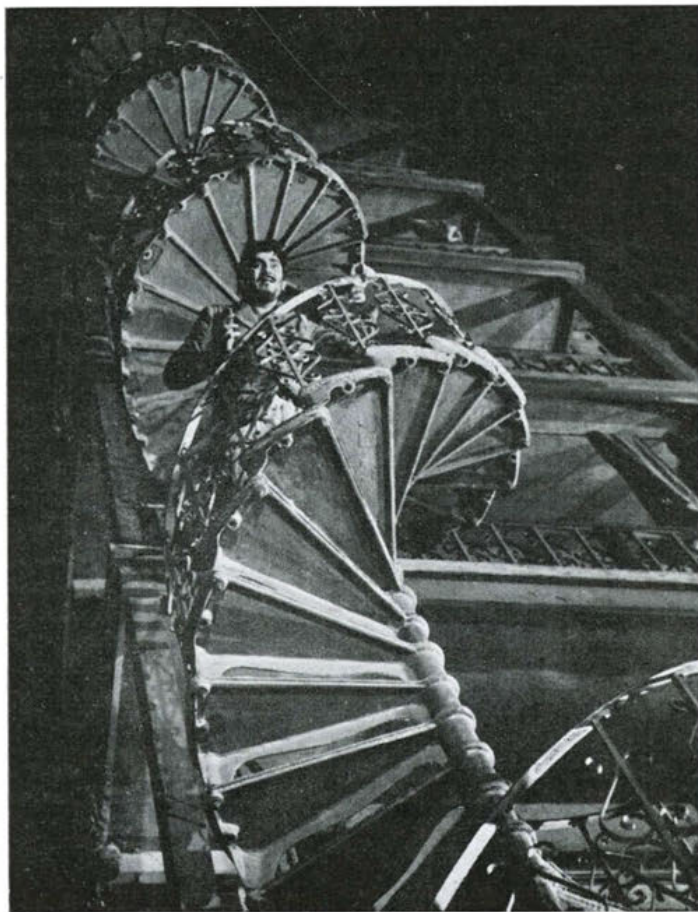
through its raw-nerved insistence on violence. One is reminded at times of Aldrich's *Attack*.

Writing, unfortunately, before the end of the Festival, I have been unable to see some of its most important films—Visconti's *Notti Bianche*, Satyajit Ray's *Aparajita*, Zinnemann's *A Hatful of Rain* and Clair's *Porte des Lilas*, to be shown out of competition since Clair is president of this year's festival jury. To date, the most impressive film has undoubtedly been Akira Kurosawa's *Kumonosu-jo* (*Throne of Blood*), his adaptation of *Macbeth* into a Japanese feudal setting. The most fascinating aspect of this picture, perhaps, is that it has been done at all, that the story, with only minor variations, fits so aptly into its alien setting. A dark and savage work, made with great vigour, authority and control, it has about it a rather cold brilliance. When this *Macbeth* dies, transfixed by the arrows of his own soldiers, one has little sense of a tragic fall, a collapse of greatness. If Toshiro Mifune's warlord rather lacks stature, however, there is compensation in Isuzu Yamada's Lady *Macbeth*, a performance of lethal coldness and determination.

Of the films shown outside competition, two at least must be mentioned: Andrej Wajda's fine story of the Polish resistance, *A Girl Has Spoken*, which was also shown at Cannes, and *A Sunday Romance*, a first film by a young Hungarian director, Imre Feher. The story concerns a young journalist, irresponsible and charming, who falls in love with a servant girl but finally lacks the courage to cross the barrier of class; the treatment has an elegance, humour and tenderness reminiscent of the Ophul's of *Liebelei*.

Finally, although this article is written too early for the feature festival awards to be known, it is good to record not only that Britain won a handsome number of prizes in the short film and documentary festival but that the Grand Prix also went deservedly to this country, to Lindsay Anderson's *Every Day Except Christmas*.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.



KARLOVY VARY

ALTHOUGH this year's 10th International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary failed to yield up any new masterpiece, the event clearly demonstrated—in the range of subject matter and national styles—how wide the horizons of the cinema have grown during the last ten years. The language may be universal but genuine artists remain few and far between; inevitably, one's patience was often taxed by some plodding East European epic or glossy Scandinavian message of doom that should never have passed the selection committee. But a large international audience, undeterred by the stifling heatwave of the festival's first days, gave sympathetic applause to both the good and the indifferent. Despite the generally serious mood engendered by the Festival's avowed political allegiances, and some solemn platitudes in the opening speeches, "uncommitted" enjoyment was also much in evidence, notably in the spirited official newsreels. Out-of-festival activities included a trip to the Plzeň breweries, where coach loads of delegates were greeted by a brass band and encouraged to inspect the local product. An impromptu, well-lubricated concert which followed included such rare spectacles as a *trepak* danced by an Indian producer and a Russian actress and some full-throated singing of "John Brown's Body" in a dozen tongues. (Perhaps fortunately, this correspondent narrowly escaped being called on to render our famous national song, "My Old Dutch".)

Visitors from among the 40-odd countries represented included the directors Arnshtam, Emmer, Martin Frič, Trnka, numerous young Asian film-makers, and an exotic figure from the past, Gustav Machaty, who announced that he was planning a German re-make of *Extase*. Western visitors could therefore make contacts virtually impossible at other festivals. While many East European journalists and film-makers to whom I spoke condemned the restrictive bureaucratic practices of the post-war period—one director described a recent production as "merely socialist pathos"—they also criticised what they thought to be the relative position of the West: "You have technique and little content; we have content and, for the moment, uncertain technique".

Desire for news about the West was considerable (American films are hard to come by, though some British, Italian, Spanish and German pictures were playing in Prague), and I had to face some leading questions, notably from those fortunate enough to attend private screenings and foreign festivals. The most persistent was: "We like your best comedies, but why don't you send more films showing life in your country as it exists today?" The Festival's two British features, *Doctor at Large* and *Three Men in a Boat*, aroused some laughter but little favourable critical comment. America sent only a nicely photographed, slightly pretentious short, *A Dancer's World*, about the Martha Graham company.

The importance of adequate representation from the West was made doubly clear by the challenge implicit in the best entries from East Europe and Asia. Although set in the 1930's, Zoltan Fabri's *Professor Hannibal*, which analyses the fate of a timid don who finds himself victimised as an enemy of the people after publishing a piece of historical research, points some disturbing contemporary parallels in its scenes of mob hysteria and political opportunism. This tone of savage irony is sometimes weakened by passages of empty bravura (here Fabri reveals affinities with other young directors, notably Michael Cacoyannis), and there are flaws in the somewhat caricatured portrait of the professor himself. Nevertheless the strength of the message—the necessity to uphold the truth as the individual sees it—won a direct response from this audience.

Other East European entries mainly gave an impression of

Raj Kapoor in his own production "*Jagte Raho*", Grand Prix winner at Karlovy Vary.



Zoltan Fabri's "*Professor Hannibal*", shown at the Edinburgh and Karlovy Vary festivals.

promise rather than fulfilment, and almost all suffered from rambling and indecisive scripting. Karel Stekly's new Czech version of *The Good Soldier Schweik* proved flat and humourless; and Dzigan's *Prologue* was a boringly predictable "formula" picture of the 1905 revolution in Petrograd, complete with mass widescreen battles. Of greater interest was the fresco-like Bulgarian-Soviet co-production *Lesson of History*, a reconstruction of the Reichstag Fire and the Dimitrov trial realised by Arnshtam with some force and moments of bold imagery. A firmer personal response could be found in Vladimir Pogacic's *Great and Small*, the most striking of the two Yugoslav entries. A tragic story of a resistance leader who is given shelter by the son of an old friend, the film sometimes over-stresses its Hitchcock-type suspense, though its final scenes crystallise into a moving statement on human loyalties and friendship.

Human problems were also stressed in the unusually large Asian entry, with films from Burma, Ceylon, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan and Viet-nam. Sang Hu, who made the beautiful Chinese opera film *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-Tai*, brought his latest production *New Year Sacrifice*, a period drama tracing the unhappy life of a Chinese woman sold in marriage. Slow, richly coloured and lovingly played, its mood of poetic melancholy is admirably sustained and its characters subtly delineated. The sad, interior faces of the people and the apt, uncluttered décors often suggest the influence of Japanese film-makers. Although the director at present lacks their professional flair, his film's feeling is pure and eloquent. Raj Kapoor, a young Indian producer, won the Festival's Grand Prix with his *Jagte Rano*, an allegorical tale of a simple beggar immersed

in the intrigues of modern civilisation. The film mixes raw slapstick with elements of Clair and Chaplin; finally unsatisfactory, it shows a lively and enquiring talent in its attempt to fit the conventions of the Indian cinema into a symbolic framework.

Returning to the other European entries, Kurt Hoffmann's *The Confession of Felix Krull* (West Germany) failed to sustain the promise of its brilliant opening sequence. Deprived of much of Thomas Mann's moral philosophy, the film remains an elegantly staged essay in seduction, but without real irony or bitterness. Of a large Italian entry (including two lavish CinemaScope features and Maselli's *La Donna del Giorno*) I saw only Emmer's *The Most Beautiful Moment*. Clumsily combining a novelettish hospital romance with some documentary hints on painless childbirth, it suggests an almost total eclipse of his once promising talent.

This Czech journey ended with two rewarding days in Prague. Here, thanks to the generous hospitality of officials of the Film Archive, I was able to visit the admirable Cinematograph Museum, various offices of the Archive and also the Trnka studios, where work is in progress on an ambitious CinemaScope puppet version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Final impressions are of a festival at which points of view were exchanged and contacts established. The harsh realities of our contemporary situation may not be lessened by such an event—the Hungarian revolution was rarely discussed, for instance. For a time, though, the Iron Curtain ceased to exist and one could enjoy the pleasure of mutual interests; and that, surely, is not a bad thing.

JOHN GILLET

LOOKING FOR DOCUMENTARY

part two

by DAVID ROBINSON

The Ones that Got Away

The first problem of education today is essentially one of understanding the technological world in which we live, and every force which directs its development has something of importance to say.—JOHN GRIERSON.

I want to make people—ordinary people, not Top People—feel their dignity and their importance, so that they can act from these principles. Only on such principles as these can confident and healthy action be based.—LINDSAY ANDERSON.

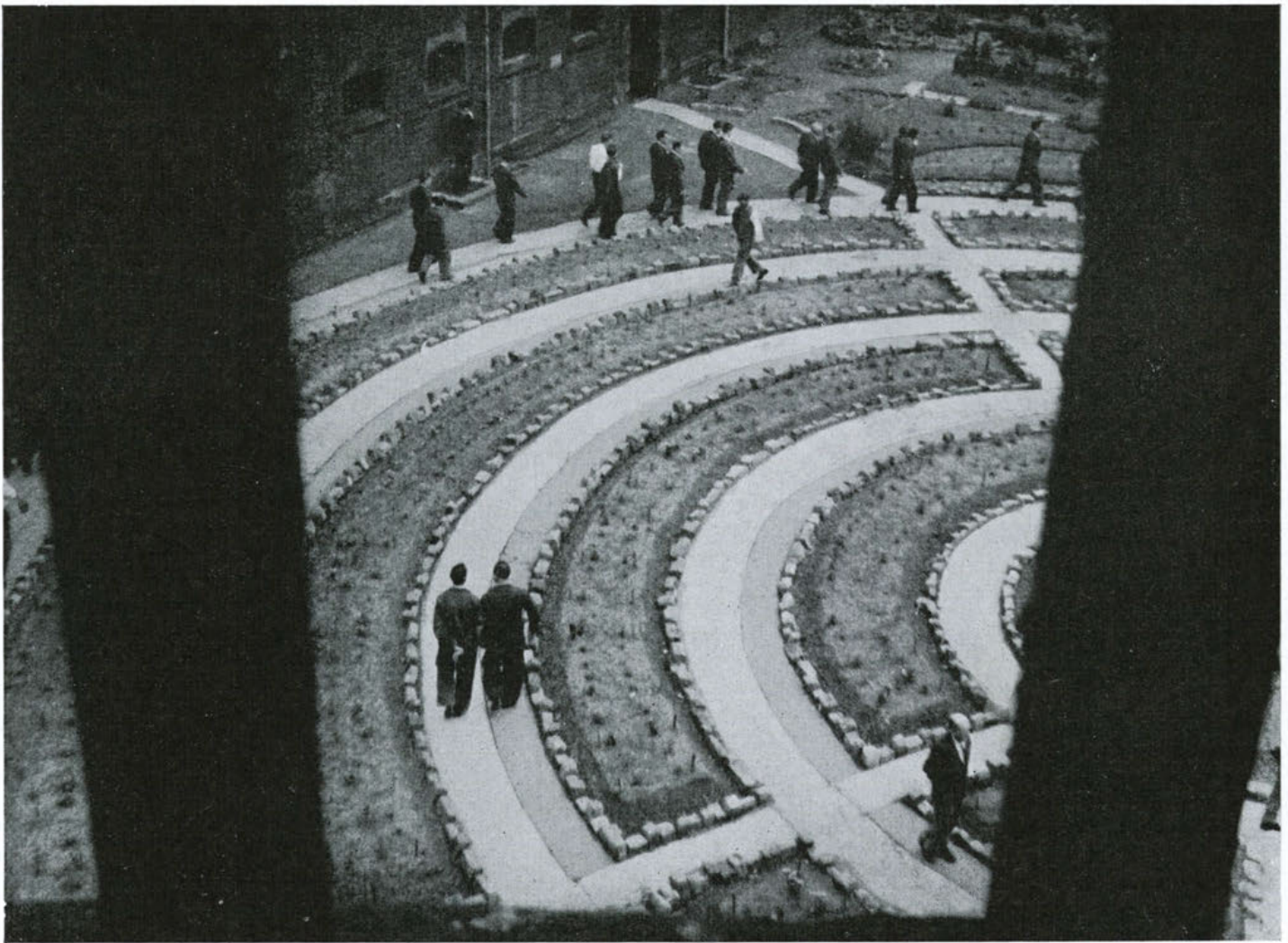
SINCE the first of these articles appeared I have been asked why I paid so little attention to the great bulk of purely technical, educational and expository films produced each year in this country; and it may be as well to redefine the scope of the articles. My concern is primarily with the particular kind of documentary that began in the 'thirties with the work of Grierson, where "we pass from the plain (or fancy) descriptions of natural material to arrangements, rearrangements, and creative shapings of it". Important and essential as the first kind of documentary is, it is just because the British industry's record in this field is generally so high that I am more concerned here with the other kind of documentary, the kind that reflects life and interprets it.

The worst enemy of this sort of documentary in Britain is the contemporary devaluation of the serious. Perhaps it is still a result of the war, still a reaction against the "total effort" of the early 'forties, that we seem to have drooped into a debilitated state in which *purposive* and *serious* and *boring* and *dreary* are all taken as synonymous, and so are *entertaining* and *fun* and *interesting*; and like two north poles the two ideas may never be approximated. It makes for a pretty saddening and, in the end, a dispiriting disintegration of our lives and our work; and it has already been discussed by Lindsay Anderson in his manifesto *Stand Up! Stand Up!*

However weakening to other forms of art, to the documentary film this cynical disintegration can be disastrous. Documentary is "the kind of film that makes its drama from facts"; and, whether its form is comic or tragic or dramatic or farcical, it will be serious in the sense that it will have the weight of truth. In the case of documentary, cynicism has almost been encouraged by the critics. When the *Manchester Guardian's* film critic or Miss Dilys Powell writes "dull and documentary", or



A great documentary subject: oil. James Hill's "The New Explorers," for British Petroleum.



A subject neglected by documentary. Denis Mitchell's "In Prison" for BBC Television.

says of a film that "it breaks one of the rules which governed the documentary in the famous 'thirties, it admits the possibility of pleasure . . ." they are not only commenting on the nature of documentary, past or present, but admitting their own allegiance to the cynical differentiation of pleasure from responsibility, enjoyment from truth.

To some extent the disintegration has only been encouraged by the film-makers themselves. Showmanship is as much a part of making pictures as words are a part of making poetry. The most exciting subject in the world can be sacrificed, without the showmanship which must follow a film from script to screen. To some extent "the creative treatment . . ." is showmanship; but it is hard to deny that from time to time the first generation of documentarists (out of the eye of Grierson, one imagines) forgot or even denied their duty as showmen:

. . . The Shell Film Unit has little use for the accepted canons of showmanship. It is not, indeed, too much to say that it is anti-showman.—STUART LEGG.

In their disregard for showmanship, in the conviction that they were politicians and pedagogues before they were artists, quite a number of documentarists needlessly threw away audiences and sympathy. By contrast, the audiences and sympathies that can be won for very

serious subjects by considered showmanship have been demonstrated only recently by the American cinema. The last few months have seen serious feature films on racial relationships (*A Man is Ten Feet Tall*), juvenile delinquency (*The Young Stranger*, *Crime in the Streets*), labour disputes (*The Garment Jungle*) and gutter journalism (*The Sweet Smell of Success*). With a feature cinema of the American range, we might feel less strongly the need for a progressive and forward-looking documentary.

2

Documentary, I have suggested, can have two aims. Either it can describe or explain, in factual terms, the phenomena of contemporary life—the expository documentary; or it can express an attitude, formulate a view, enrich people's ways of thinking and feeling—it can in fact help them to interpret that life. The expository documentary fulfils an important function; and in the work of Shell, ICI, British Petroleum and other sponsors there is a record of continuous technical development. "For me", explains Sir Arthur Elton, at Shell, "it has just been a continuous progression from *Aero Engine*."

The more zealous "interpretative" film-makers sometimes, I feel, undervalue the expository documentary and



1936: Edgar Anstey's "Enough to Eat", made for the Gas Light and Coke Company.

fail to see the basic distinctions between it and their own work. John Grierson wrote that "a mirror held up to nature is not so important in a dynamic and fast-changing society as the hammer which shapes it"; but he did not, for all that, deny the mirror's uses. One of the great problems of documentary has always been the difficulty of specialisation, and too many documentarists have been required to act as screen journalists. Asked to pass directly from a film on nursing to one on oil technology, a film-maker will acquire a sturdy resilience; but he can also decline to the level of a hack.

In these circumstances, the single-minded specialisation that Shell can afford seems healthy; and to abuse the Unit for not deploying part of its (admittedly princely) resources into a different kind of film-making is dangerous. Of course the maker of expository documentary ignores the human and social relevance of his themes at grave risk. But when Shell directors have felt an obligation towards conscious sociological side-glances the result has not always been happy. To me, *The Rival World*, when it tries to treat the sociological aspects of its theme—the menace of disease-bearing insects—goes outside its director's range to become superficial and inconclusive; while the more modest *The Ruthless One*, within its limits, eventually makes a more comprehensive and valid statement. *Song of the Clouds*, which has been greatly praised for its fine (and remarkably expensive) pictures, is pathetically inadequate to face a real world. With its facile half-truths—"no two people at present living in this world are more than two days journey from each other"—it gives a disturbing glimpse of the possibility of a *telefono bianco* documentary. On the other hand, in such films as *The Cornish Engine* and, on a different level, *High Speed Flight, Part I*, Shell finds its own way to poetry, and in the process makes a real comment on its world.

3

It seems to me, however, that the other kind of film, the one whose object is to interpret the world, in terms that are intellectual or spiritual, that sets out to express or to create an attitude, that demonstrates an artist's view rather than a craftsman's skill, is finally more important. Inevitably such films will be about people rather than things: about facts there can be dispute, but there is no room for the kind of attitudes that arise where people are concerned. And being about people, it is inevitable that the nature of these films will

be affected by the situation in which people find themselves at a particular moment in history. To this extent one of the distinctions of the interpretative documentary is that it can rarely exist in isolation. Following the prevailing tone and needs, the documentaries of any period will have a good deal in common. Documentary is of necessity a thing of "movements": the Grierson school was a movement; the wartime documentary was a movement; Free Cinema typifies a movement. And at any time I believe that the vigour and strength of a particular documentary movement will depend upon the fidelity with which it interprets and reflects the prevailing requirements and tone. To quote Grierson again:

The key to the creative worker's position and strength is of course that he should first and foremost understand the nature of the problems which society at this specific moment imposes on him and that he should not only align himself with the forces that are shaping tomorrow but himself add his measure of creative leadership to them.

In the 'thirties the impulse for documentary was strong and unmistakable and irresistible—or so it now seems. The tasks were obvious. "The Projection" of Britain and the Empire soon became subsidiary to the business of hastening the process of socialisation and of fitting people for life in a technologically controlled and socialist society. "The basic problem of education", in Grierson's view, lay "not so much in the acquisition of literacy or of knowledge or of skills, as in the patterns of civic appreciation, civic faith and civic duty that go with them".

With Grierson's school still fully bent to the job, the War began, and the documentary machine was "geared to total effort". The War ended; and incidentally the socialist state had been won. The old jobs were finished and for a moment the new ones seemed obvious. 'Internationalism' was the watch word: Bertrand Russell's business of "making peace interesting" seemed the job ahead. But—

... War makes rattling good history
But peace is poor reading.

The impulse somehow petered out. Paul Rotha's *World of Plenty* and *The World Is Rich**, grand, noisy pieces of *Mirror* journalism, were voices crying in the wilderness. Rotha and Wright's *World Without End* (1951) was the last big and brave representative of 'Internationalism'.

Actual examples best show how the zeal of the early 'thirties flagged in twenty years. The cruel, naked realism of *Housing Problems* and *Enough to Eat* gave way to the evasive prettifications of films like Ralph Keene's *Cyprus is an Island*. In 1930 John Grierson planned and imagined a film about the Port of London:

Mine is strictly the Port of London you can stick a camera against and get. . . It is a port of ships that come and go, of processions of men that fight like dogs for work in the morning and proceed to load and unload the merchandise of the living world. . .

Grierson's film was never made; but twenty-one years later Basil Wright made *Waters of Time*. Urbane and beautiful to look at, with a mellifluous poetic commentary by Paul Dehn, it was very different from Grierson's idea. There was none of the urgency: "It has a *fin de siècle* aesthetic quality", said Paul Rotha.

It is hard, now, to argue why British documentary of the "interpretative" type ran suddenly into artistic—as well as economic—doldrums in the period after the war; why it

* Rotha's "trademark" of titles containing the word 'World' seems to have been a gesture to 'Internationalism.'

seemed to lack a real sense of direction, a sense of the needs and tone of the times. Certainly 'Internationalism'—whatever it ultimately meant—did not provide the answer, nor did the energetic attempts artificially to conjure up an impulse—the British Documentary and World Documentary Organisations, for example.

It may be that the film-makers (and immediately after the war almost all the leading documentarists were old Griersonians), trained so hard to respond to one impulse, could not have easily adapted themselves to another even if they had been able to discover it.

"In the best days", wrote Dilys Powell in 1953, the British documentary was an attacking cinema; something, it said again and again, had got to be done. We have the Welfare State—and the belligerent documentary-makers have lost their subject. It is no longer quite so obvious that something has got to be done in this country.

Her view—that the Old Documentary had lost its subjects and with them its vital impulse—is echoed by almost all the surviving first generation, many of whom will tell you: "There are no social problems now; the work we set out to do is finished".

But at least the best of the Old Griersonians have stayed on the field, even if not in the front line of creative activity. Jennings, of course, is dead and can never be sufficiently lamented. Some, like Harry Watt, Jack Lee and John Eldridge, have been won over to feature films. But others—Sir Arthur Elton, Edgar Anstey, Basil Wright, Stuart Legg, Stewart McAllister—have become producers; and their influence and responsibility cannot be underestimated. Paul Rotha continues his belabouring of the iniquitous industry. They have all in one way or another helped many recruits into the industry and encouraged them with excitement and generosity. The worst crimes of any of them towards their successors have been those of incomprehension. Basil Wright alone of these continues to direct films: he is about to begin another, and a new film by him always promises to be an event. He was not merely "the best cutter in the business": in *Song of Ceylon* he showed himself to be the most potentially poetic of the whole Grierson school.

4

It is not strictly true to claim, as the *vieux garde* are inclined to do, that the problem of documentary (and the problem is undeniably a big one) is that there are no longer social questions for discussion. There might, for example, be a documentary on race relations in this country; but there is none. There is no British documentary (with the honourable exception of *Momma Don't Allow*) that has endeavoured to show the emergence of the militant teenager or to establish his place in society. There is no film to help old and young or privileged and under-privileged to understand each other. There is no film on homosexuality or prostitution or prisons* or capital punishment or crime and its treatment in a growing-up society. There are no films about the contemporary hierarchies, which reflect or assist the new misfits like Richard Hoggart's *Scholarship Boy* or John Osborne's dispossessed souls, or rich bricklayers and poor debs. There are few good films on schools or youth clubs or social settlements or the

* Max Anderson's film *Four Men in Prison* has never been publicly shown.

health service or industrial relations.

Such work as has been done, and to which we must look for to-day's movements and motives in documentary, has been achieved chiefly by a handful of new artists, most of them working outside the main framework of Government and large private sponsorship. Already common themes and common aims unite their best work, most of which has appeared in the last two or three years. Most of them seem concerned with basic human relationships and the problems of establishing communication on a human level. Their common impulse appears to be the response to those new problems of adjustment created by social reorganisation; to the increasing menace of national and social barriers in a shrinking universe.

This marks a distinct change from the temper of the 'thirties, when they felt that the treatment of social and personal relationships had its dangers:

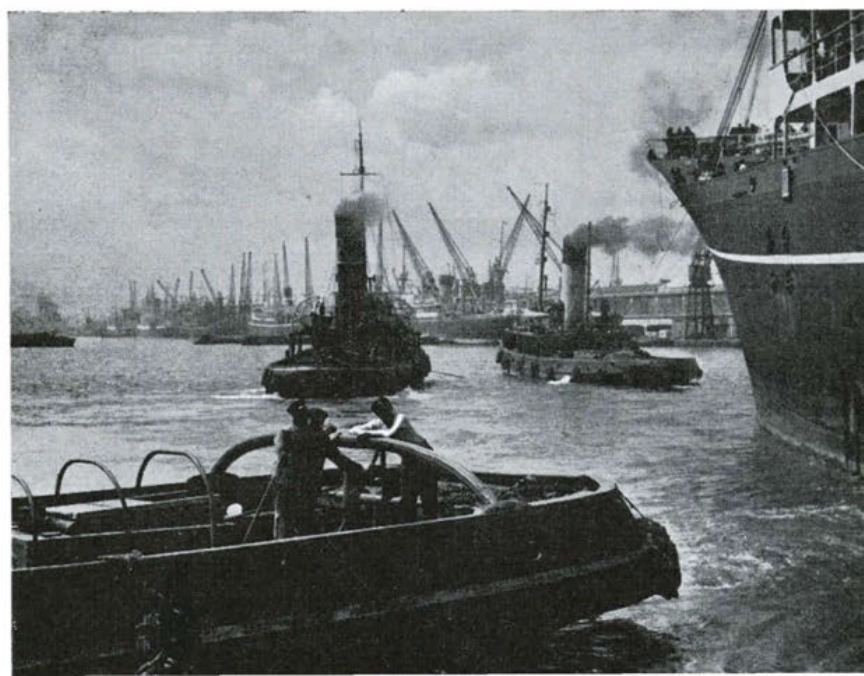
We think that Hollywood, Denham and Elstree lay far too much emphasis on the purely personal side of life. . . —JOHN GRIERSON.

The danger as they saw it then was in becoming parochial. Now the need to examine individual problems of relationship and communication is prime; the atomisation of society so that it can be reintegrated is no longer a parochial process, but mondial.

5

It is encouraging that this sense of common purpose, of humane affirmation, does not appear only in the hard-won and highly personal works like *People Apart* or *Thursday's Children*, but is from time to time evident in anonymous two or three-minute contributions to television actuality programmes. Otherwise there would be relatively little cause for optimism; the first products of what one looks to as the new movement of British documentary are, numerically at least, so slight as to make it presumptuous to think of them even as a nucleus. Nevertheless the films and their makers are of a calibre which is unmistakable.

Lindsay Anderson is one of the most articulate and individual artists working in the British cinema today; and so far his work has been entirely in documentary. His reputation rests on a body of highly personal, shrewd and vigorous criticism and a small number of short films. His earlier work included some industrial documentaries (made for Richard Sutcliffe) significantly concerned with men's relationship to their work; and *Wakefield Express* and *Foot and Mouth* (Basic Films for Col for the Ministry of Agriculture).



Wakefield Express was made very cheaply to mark the centenary of the newspaper of that name; and in parts it suffers both from the obligations of sponsorship and from economic restrictions. Yet it demonstrates Anderson's aim to "open up the British cinema . . . to give documentary a human feeling". The film shows that a local paper is not just paper and machines; but the people who make its news. *Foot and Mouth* is a simple film, made for a specific and mundane job. It is a key example of how a film made to a sponsor's exact requirements can, by its truth and artistry, achieve much more. This film contains some of the best evocations of the English countryside in the cinema, and often recalls the opening scenes of Franju's *Le Sang des Bêtes*. Three trailers made for the N.S.P.C.C.—*Green and Pleasant Land*, *The Children Upstairs* and *Henry*—have a power which also recalls Franju rather than any other English director. But Anderson's best work is the amateur, 16mm. *O Dreamland*. Made quite privately, this strange, equivocal film, with its marvellous anger and compassion, has a poetry which would alone have established Anderson as a film-maker to reckon with. Most important, it shows, as clearly as his latest film, *Every Day Except Christmas*, his preoccupation to establish human contacts and relationships, greater human sympathy and understanding. The same feeling characterises the whole "Free Cinema" movement, which so much centres on Anderson and his work.

Thursday's Children is almost beyond praise; it was made by Lindsay Anderson and Guy Brenton, and the process of collaboration seems to have thrashed out the best qualities in both artists. Brenton's determination towards a purposeful and humane use of the film appears one of the most promising signs for the future of our documentary. Before *Thursday's Children* he had made *Birthday* for the National Fund for Polio Research; subsequently he was engaged on some routine chores before he managed to make, for the British Epilepsy Association, his remarkable film *People Apart*. This film exactly reflects Brenton's own extreme dedication and intensity. Almost obsessively it encloses you in the lives and problems of a group of human beings who are also epileptics: then it asks, can you reject them, and in your ignorance cast them out of society? At the moment Brenton is engaged on a film about William Blake, to be produced by Basil Wright.

Paul Dickson a few years ago was the one hope of British documentary. After working with Paul Rotha, he developed a particular sensitivity to people and their relationships, a remarkable tact and skill in handling non-actors. These gifts appeared at their best in *The Undeclared* (a film about disabled ex-servicemen made for the Ministry of Pensions, 1950) and in *David* (made for the Welsh 1951 Festival Committee), a beautiful and moving account of the life of a miner who becomes, following an accident, a school caretaker. Since then, however, Dickson has failed to live up to the promise of these films. It may partly be the seduction of feature films (he directed *Satellite in the Sky* and also many shorts for television); partly certainly, the disillusion of an artist with a highly individual point of view faced with the restricting circumstances of documentary cinema. His few recent documentaries have been undistinguished. But the most ambitious, *The Film That Never Was*, while lacking the flair and sensitivity of his best work, is still a sympathetic piece of snook-cocking by a sponsor-ridden film artist.

Disillusion may or may not account for the more complete disappearance from British documentary of other artists. Brian Smith, who was largely responsible for many of the Realist *Your Children* . . . series, is now in Cambodia. John Waterhouse, a gifted director who made *Men at Work* (World Wide, for the British Productivity Council), as well as several films for Massingham (including the excellent *Another Case of Food Poisoning*) is in Brazil.

Other people, who are still working, have brought back some light and air into the documentary of real life and real people. Anthony Simmonds' *Bow Bells* and *Sunday by the Sea*,

John Krish's *The Elephant Never Forgets* (British Transport Films) and, perhaps, James Hill's *The New Explorers* (World Wide, for British Petroleum) all look in the same direction. Among creative documentarists, too, must not be forgotten Walter Lassally, the outstanding cameraman, whose name appears on the credits of a startling number of the more progressive British documentaries.

6

In assessing their work, it is necessary to consider to what extent all these artists are restricted by the commercial and financial hazards of documentary, the economic problems I discussed in the first part of this article. In order to make the personal films that really interest them, the directors must also turn out routine, made-to-order chores. Some are likely to spend months on end churning out TV commercials, or, at best, half-hour television serials. It is hardly surprising, then, that for the bulk of the most vital documentary output at the moment we must turn to television. A little earlier, I listed a few of the social and human themes which have not been attempted by the documentary cinema. Yet it should be noted that every one of these subjects has been treated, in one way or another, by television.

The broadcasting arts are new, and the recruitment of B.B.C. and I.T.V. personnel is peculiar and haphazard. Like the rest, the documentary departments (they call them Talks or Features: the mud sticks hard to Grierson's horrid word) are composed of journalists and ex-actors and producers and a-s-m's; of film-men and critics and people fished up from heaven-knows-where. That is why film people call them Bloody Amateurs; and the system is often very surprising by film industry standards. Thrown off the deep end, people from sound broadcasting or the theatre find themselves producing full-scale documentary films or features. The outcome may be fiasco or miracle. At all events, it gives a consciously experimental air, especially at the B.B.C., where from time to time they have experimented with an enthusiasm and naivete recalling, in its modest way, the carryings-on of the Proletcult group. The result may be temporary comic crazes or dogmatisms. (At one time, it is said, there was an edict that no music might be used in documentary programmes; currently there is a craze for wild-track commentaries in the manner originally developed by Denis Mitchell.) Nevertheless the results are very satisfactory, if measured in terms of the range of subjects treated and the real, popular drama extracted from them by sincere and imaginative treatment.

It is hard to single out individual artists when so many of television's best moments are three-minute bits of film journalism made for *Panorama* or *Tonight* or *This Week*. On I.T.V. (Associated-Rediffusion) Peter Morley has produced *Fan Fever*, a brilliant little account of modern idolatry, made to coincide with Liberace's visit to London, and the *Member's Mail* series, introduced by Dan Farson and covering a sensational range of current questions in a bright, journalistic documentary style. At the B.B.C. Huw Wheldon produced the intermittently brilliant series *Portraits of Power*. Norman Swallow has been associated with numerous TV documentaries since Paul Rotha was at the B.B.C., including many of the three series *The World is Ours*, *Special Enquiry* and *Eye to Eye*. John Read's art films have already been discussed in SIGHT AND SOUND; the latest, on L. S. Lowry, is perhaps the best of them all.

I feel, however, that potentially the most important artist produced by television is Denis Mitchell. So far his best work has been done in sound only; and he has perfected a technique of "the creative treatment of actuality" in sound. Some of his *People Talking* series—especially *Night in the City* and *Only Believe* . . ., an account of a Divine Healing church—were poetic works of art as much as *Hôtel des Invalides* or *Listen to Britain*. His work on television films is as yet inconsiderable, being limited to three programmes during the last eighteen



Problems of adjustment: mental hospital patient in Margaret Thompson's "Continuous Observation".

months. The material he collected for *Special Enquiry—Teenagers* provided a penetrating picture of a group of young people, Teddy boys and girls, student and deb-model. In *Prison* betrayed his over-riding preoccupation with sound: the sound-track was, in fact, complete in itself and the pictures did not match its standard. Mitchell's best TV feature to date is *Night in the City*. Ranging wider, it was less complete and satisfying than his radio feature of the same title; but for all that an exciting, extraordinary impressionist film, with its juxtaposition of mad people, ragged scholars and philosophers, tarts, taximen and faith-healers.

Mitchell dissembles his passionate love for people and eagerness to show people to themselves: "I offer no conclusions, take no moral attitudes, though I try to give both sides of a case". But in the selection and editing of his material there is an implicit comment. There is no ignoring the terrific indictment (albeit it comes from their own mouths) of the feckless parents of the children at a Saturday Reporting School, no doubt of where his sympathies lie among the teenagers with their varied opportunities and aspirations.

This film, incidentally, illustrates one of the important advantages enjoyed by television: its freedom from censorship restrictions. Mitchell is able to show his Teddy boys with ordinary human sympathy, just as they are, normal, silly, and essentially likeable. Lorenza Mazzetti, however, was informed by the film censor that "her proposed sympathetic investigation of Teddy Boys would not be approved unless she concluded by categorically condemning Teddy Boys". Subsequently the *Daily Film Renter* commented, in approval of this decision: "In what way, we wonder, is a flick-knife on Clapham Common worthier of approbation than a tommy-gun in Chicago?"

Television has, been able to do so much that some film-makers—particularly among the older generation—are prepared to say that television has taken over the jobs of documentary. This is as great a mistake as to accept that television has superseded books; or to attribute the demise of *Picture Post*, as its proprietor did, to television's direct competition in its field. The fact is that—however future developments may bring the two techniques closer together—for the moment film and television documentary remain different

Problems of adjustment: deaf child in "Thursday's Children"

things. In the present economic circumstances much more time and money may be spent on an ordinary film than on a film for television. Consequently the film-maker is often able to make statements of greater force or subtlety—if less immediacy—than the television producer. (The *Special Enquiry* on *Clean Food*, for example, was a good deal less effective than Waterhouse's *Another Case of Food Poisoning*. or Alex Strasser's new *Keep It Clean*.) Television is certainly the best way of setting people talking to us; but it is harder in television for the artist to interpose himself, as Guy Brenton interposes himself in *People Apart* or Lindsay Anderson in *O Dreamland*. The audience, too, is a different one, though it is as yet too early to analyse, except in the broadest terms, the relative receptivity of the voluntary audience, shut together in the darkness of a cinema, and the home audience, in isolated groups, with television as the privileged intruder peering in at their home-life but not necessarily wholly distracting them from other activities. So far, television has not superseded the documentary cinema; but there are a lot of lessons to be learnt from it.

7

What, finally, do we find, Looking For Documentary? A great deal of activity, but little of it co-ordinated to a common end. Artists of talent and vigour, but few with the opportunity or tenacity to break through the barriers of the industry's economics. Among them there is often too little regard for one another's aspirations; the Free Cinema people look jealously at Shell, where they are actually *paid* for making films, and where they spend more on a single short than all the Free Cinema films have cost together; while Sir Arthur Elton calls Free Cinema "sad and dull" and Grierson finds it "baby stuff". Producers, it seems, are in need of the courage and imagination which will enable them to make proper use of artists like Guy Brenton and Paul Dickson, who are now largely wasted. Sponsors need training to a more liberal view of patronage; and film-makers need to be less defeatist in their dealings with sponsors.

Above all, it will be hard for real documentary to exist until there is a more generous and imaginative and enlightened policy of official sponsorship, which can see the necessity of films which contribute to the intellectual and spiritual life of our nation, and not just to our physical existence.



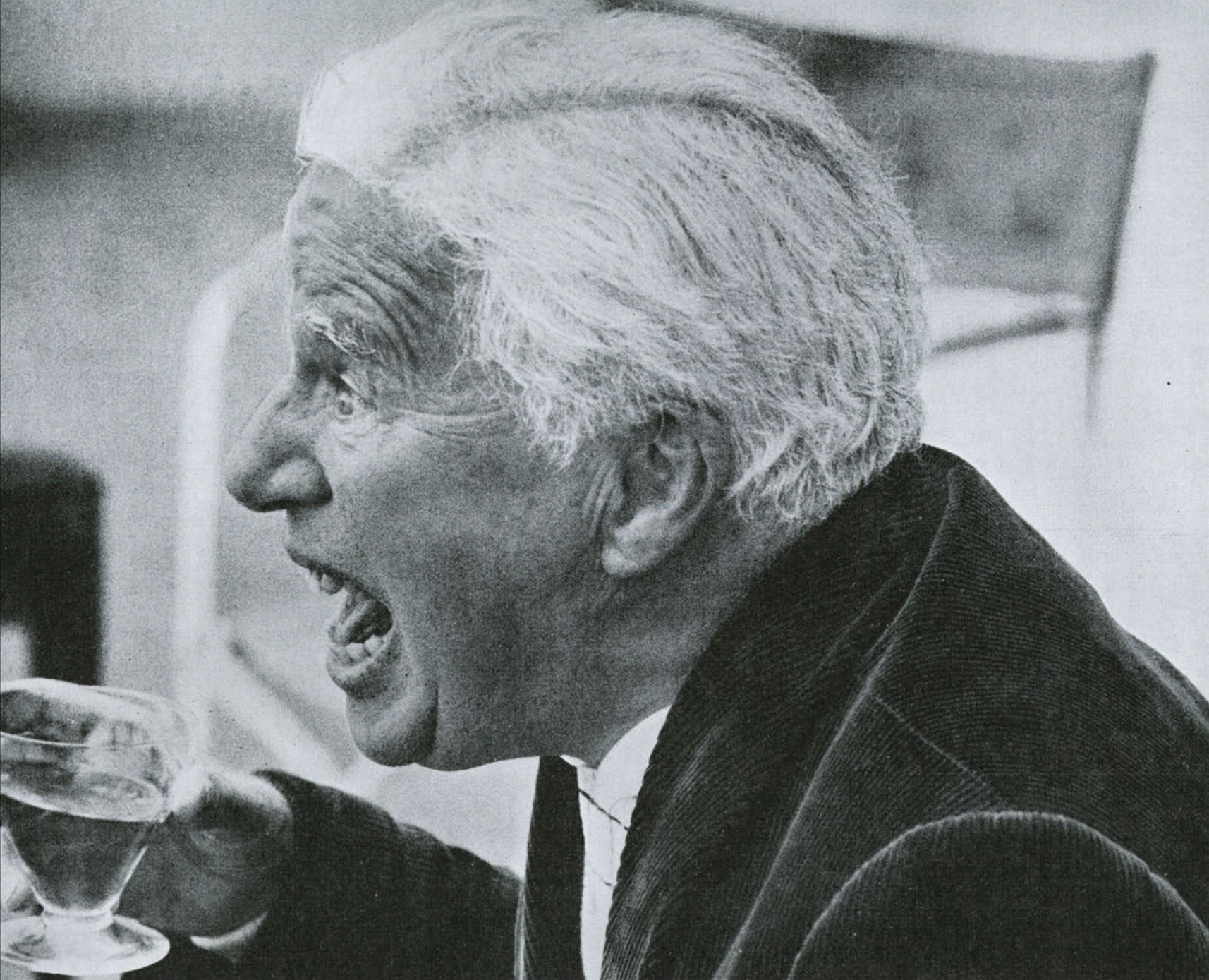


Photo: Roger Wood

An Interview with CHAPLIN

MARGARET HINXMAN

ALMOST as soon as we arrived, the bronzed swimming instructor at the hotel in Cap Ferrat cornered us. "You are here to see Mr. Chaplin? What luck! I want to see him more than any other man in the world. I teach his son Michael water-skiing. One day I went up to the villa; I could just see the top of Mr. Chaplin's head through a window. But the secretary told me 'Please don't look at Mr. Chaplin. He doesn't like to be stared at. . .'" He sighed, adjusted a dazzling smile and went off to give a lesson.

But the slight chill he left behind him was catching. "Of course", explained the publicist, "it all depends on Mr. Chaplin's mood. Maybe he'll spend the whole day with you—or maybe you'll just get ten minutes. You never can tell". Suddenly this interview with Chaplin, that had started as a job, began to assume the proportions of an Experience—and maybe not of the pleasantest kind.

And then at last we were shaking hands with a wiry, white-haired man, who greeted us as though we were the first welcome visitors from the outside world. He cocked

his head on one side and smiled that ridiculous, coy smile. We breathed again. Obviously the mood was right.

Anxiously, he wanted to know what we thought of *A King in New York*. "Did you think it was so anti-American, as they all say it is? *Did you?*" For a while he gave a fair imitation of a man who didn't care that it had been ignored by America. "Of course; it will never be shown there". But from the way he worried the point you felt that he did care, desperately. No matter how Europe honours him, he is still deeply hurt at the manner in which America rejected him. He gives the impression of a man who is trying to conceal a wound that will never entirely heal.

"I'm not a politician. I'm not a Communist. I told them at the Press Conference when *Monsieur Verdoux* was shown, 'I've lived in the United States for forty years. I haven't started a revolution yet, I'm certainly not planning to start one and I don't think I ever shall'. I told them", he repeated.

Reverting to *A King in New York* and its jibes at America: "Americans have no sense of humour about themselves, not like the British", he shrugged. At the end of the film, he had implied that this American witch-hunting hysteria was just a passing phase: did he think it had passed now, we asked. But he wouldn't commit himself. "Everything has to change—everything, in time".

Through the window that looked on to the terrace, we could see various Chaplin children, slim, brown and all like diminutive copies of his wife, Oona, flitting nimbly around. "They're such wonderful mimics, they inhibit me—and I thought I was a pretty good mimic". The switch from anxious film-maker to proud father was revealing. He related with obvious pleasure his son Michael's remark on seeing himself in *A King in New York*: "it makes me look so young". He is apparently a solemn boy, given to deep meditations and poetry reading in the early morning.

His daughter Josephine, Chaplin told us, was in the throes of wanting to become a Catholic. "There was a time when I'd have liked to turn Catholic. That was when I was just a boy, one of the Lancashire Lads. All the other Lancashire Lads were Catholics, and how I envied them with their beads and crosses and religious statues. It all looked so mysterious and exciting. I never did change my religion, though—it would have hurt my mother too much."

When Chaplin remembers the past he becomes a different person. And, at sixty-eight, the past seems to be frequently and vividly in his thoughts. "Smells, you know, smells bring it back more than anything else. That's what I discovered when I returned to England. As you get older the far-off past becomes clearer; the recent past you can't remember so well". And for the first time we were conscious that Chaplin wasn't a young man any more. Occasionally, he brings out a pair of serviceable spectacles to peer at some document. Even so, he can only read when the paper is an inch from his nose.

The people he talks of most vividly—all "very dear friends of mine"—are the colleagues of the past, some of them long dead. "Jolson—he had the kind of projection none of the young people have today. He was a silly man—always 'let's go to the races', that sort of

thing. And he sang the most terrible songs. But he *believed* them and he made the audience believe them".

"Pavlova—such perfection, it made me cry".

Only when he was searching for a contemporary name did his memory desert him. "There is one young actor . . . he played in—what was that film?—something to do with a streetcar. M. . . M. . . Marlon Brando"—he produced the name triumphantly—"I saw him in a film about paraplegics" (*The Men*, we volunteered) "and there was a moment in that when he'd been given some bad news. I watched the way he handled that scene and I thought 'this man has something'".

Discussing his own films, he reveals an eager enthusiasm that easily transfers itself to the listener. "My greatest success? Well, financially, *The Great Dictator*. I may revive it", he decided. "Almost everyone warned me not to make it. You know who gave me the idea for it—Alexander Korda. I was looking for a subject and he suggested I try a mistaken identity story".

Divertingly, he considered the subject of where drama ends and comedy begins. "Who knows where you draw a line between comedy and tragedy? Take a funeral, for instance: the most solemn occasion. Everyone in black; tears, flowers, handkerchiefs. And then a little man arrives rather late, very breathless. He sneaks into church and sits down beside a very fat mourner who gives him a perishing look. Nervously, he moves up a seat and sits on somebody's hat. In no time, it's an hilarious comedy". He jumped up promptly and mimed the absurd episode for us.

"There's one joke that I've always wanted to use. I thought of it as long ago as *The Kid*, but I couldn't find a spot for it in that film. It's a man with a flea circus. He goes into a doss house . . . they still call them that, don't they? And the fleas get loose. He runs around searching for the fleas, calling them by name. Everyone is scratching furiously. Finally, he manages to round up all the fleas but one. There's a big man with a great straggling beard. He spots a flea in the beard, picks it out, studies it intently, then says 'Sorry, wrong one' and puts it back. And the pay-off is when a scrawny old dog starts scratching itself. The flea trainer sees it, makes a grab for the dog; and it races off down the street with the little man, calling his lost fleas, chasing after. I used a little of that in *Limelight*, but I've never been able to fit the whole episode in anywhere.

"Then there's the gag about the man who goes to a very pompous dinner party. Everything goes wrong for him. The butler gets his name wrong; his neighbour at table drops butter on his coat; the serving maid pours soup down his neck. He suffers it all with a smile and polite reassurances: 'Oh, please don't bother—it's quite all right.' Then, finally, after the last indignity, he goes berserk, runs wildly round the room, breaking the china, scaring the guests, and, at last, setting fire to the place". For a moment, Chaplin was lost in visions of happy anarchy.

It was a vengeance, you felt, that he'd like to have wreaked on the hapless cinema manager in America who ran a sneak preview of his *City Lights*. "Hate the things. I went to this one with Professor Einstein and his wife. I sat there waiting for the film to begin. When it did, I held my breath until the first laugh. And I knew I'd done it. But then, after half an hour, the houselights went up, in the middle of the film, and a voice

over the loud-speaker started extolling the virtues of this magnificent new cinema that had just been opened. I got up furiously and went in search of the manager. . .” It isn’t on record whether the manager recovered from the encounter.

It was getting late. But the Chaplin stream of reminiscence was still in full flow. He had to be reminded

that he was dining with a friend. “Very wealthy. He has a beautiful villa. Always asking us to stay there. Very dear friend”.

When we got back to the hotel, the swimming instructor was waiting for us. “Well—what was he like?” “He was like—Charlie Chaplin”, we told him, lamely. You couldn’t say fairer than that.

A King in New York

A REVIEW

THE lapses of genius are always interesting, sometimes baffling, and inevitably sad. The important thing is that they don’t, in the long run, greatly matter. Genius means, as often as not, an infinite capacity for taking risks; and with an artist like Chaplin, who has played for high stakes and never been concerned to hedge his bets, there is no possibility of failure in any small way. His new film, *A King in New York*, is for me as much of a failure as *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Limelight* were successes. Those were flawed masterpieces; this seems a failure that occasionally—but only occasionally—touches the edge of brilliance. And it is a film that appears at once important and of little lasting account: immensely revealing and discussable, as any work of Chaplin’s must be, and at the same time a picture by which one would no more consider judging its creator than one would judge Shaw by one of his very late plays. This is not to suggest that *A King in New York* looks like the work of an ageing man, something to be written off as coming out of the dim twilight of an artist. It has a good deal more to it than that. If it stands apart from Chaplin’s other work, it is because here the artist’s comment on his times reflects not the sureness of knowledge but the uncertainty of betrayal.

One can’t, of course, wholly separate the film from its creator. Chaplin left America sadly; America, or a part of America, rejected him vindictively. “For me”, I heard an immensely influential American woman columnist say

recently, “Chaplin no longer exists.” It was said not spitefully but with deliberation: a plain statement of fact. And behind *A King in New York* one cannot but feel the weight of all that this implies—the decisions hardly come to, the painful rationalisation of emotion, the tension that finds release in creation. The part Chaplin has chosen to play here is that of an exile, an onlooker, a king thrown out of his own country by revolution and looking to America for sanctuary. He finds confusion, commercialism, hysteria; drawn into this world, he remains finally uninvolved and uncommitted. His eventual retreat to Europe implies not defeat but withdrawal; a failure not of nerve but of hope.

Deliberately, Chaplin satirises American society from the sidelines. The trouble lies with the targets he has set up. King Shahdov goes to the cinema, walks through the crowded night streets, becomes involved through a girl (Dawn Addams) in the overheated world of commercial television, undergoes plastic surgery, and finds himself finally a central figure in a political scandal. The field looks wide enough for satire, but in the event the jokes come too glibly and easily. Anyone who has watched an evening of commercial television knows its possibilities for humour, and just how rapidly they are exhausted. When the king, delivering a commercial, chokes on the whisky he is supposed to extol, one remembers a ten-year-old sketch by Red Skelton in which the drink was gin and the consequences more alarming. When, in the cinema scene, the audience for CinemaScope behave like people watching a tennis match, one remembers *Punch* or *The New Yorker* exploiting just this joke within months of CinemaScope’s arrival. These things may be American but they are not America; they do not touch the reality. In the King’s ambiguous attitude towards them, his amused and sceptical condescension, one feels that Chaplin is saying not, as in the past, “laugh at this—it is the human condition” but “laugh at this—it is merely laughable”.

When the film comes most directly to the point, Chaplin gives us characteristically bold, forceful and compelling imaginative thrust. The attack on the American way of life is launched serio-comically through the mouth of a small boy (Michael Chaplin), an infant prodigy unendearing in manner and tireless in invective. His parents, school-teachers, are summoned before a McCarthyist committee, but it is the child who cracks under the inquisition, saving them at the cost of “naming names”. As a device, this offers wonderful opportunities: the extra twist of pathos, the final humiliation of surrender, the higher price to be paid. The opportunity Chaplin mainly takes, though, is that of allowing Shahdov still to stand aside. He shelters the boy; he is called before the committee and—in the picture’s most simply and directly comic scene—attends attached to the end of a fire-hose, which



“A King in New York”.

is very properly and inevitably turned on the inquisitors. The fight, however, is not the king's. His last words of comfort to the broken child almost echo those spoken earlier by the girl: all this will be forgotten, the hysteria will not last, one must sit it out or efface oneself.

Is this, ultimately, to be taken as Chaplin's own view? Is the unhappy child or the resourceful exile to be regarded finally as his spokesman? And does this uncertainty explain some unexpected imprecisions in the film's line of thought? There is anger, certainly, but anger uncertain of its purpose and direction. In *Shahdov* himself nothing seems firm or final: inadvertently, he will turn a television programme or a committee hearing into a joke; he recoils from commercialism but allows himself to be trapped by it; he rejects love but succumbs to pity; in the end he retreats, a shadow king, into the shadows. Part buffoon and part statesman, he remains wholly a bystander.

This, though, cannot be Chaplin's own role. After the great, defiant statements of *Monsieur Verdoux*, the twilight wisdom of *Limelight*, the actual words of *A King in New York* seem muffled and indistinct. Very early in his career, Chaplin made his major discovery as an artist: that great truths are mostly very simple. Since he took to speech, his danger has always appeared to lie in assuming that the converse also applies. The true, great satire on McCarthyism that Chaplin might have given us would not have been content with pointing out that committees can easily be made to look foolish and that people who stand in the way of a machine are likely to get hurt. There is also the state of mind, the climate in which the excrescence flourishes. Missing it, the film misses more than that; the great weapon of laughter misfires; the McCarthyist committee is drenched, but not lampooned.

Chaplin's laughter has always been that of humanity. In *A King in New York*, it runs thinly and at times almost sourly. One laughs at the girl who, in the middle of a dinner party, breaks suddenly into the grotesque platitudes of a television commercial; at the pompous fury and horror of the American official world confronted with infant Communism; at the king's shoulder-shrugging retreat from vulgarity and noise. One doesn't laugh at the progressive school tour, when the king becomes a target for pea-shooters and his hat is made into a pudding, or at the painful slapstick humours of plastic surgery. The plastic surgery episode, in fact, yields one sequence which seems to me as embarrassing a miscalculation as any comedian has given us since Lubitsch tried to crack jokes about concentration camps. King *Shahdov*, afraid that his newly stitched-up face will crack across if he makes any abrupt movement, sits in a night-club watching a comedy turn. The act is old music hall stuff, with two solemn comedians grimly plastering each other with whitewash. The sophisticated night-club audience finds it hysterically funny; the king, struggling to avoid laughter, is convulsed. But the spectacle of a man trying not to laugh at something can only be funny if we are ourselves laughing; and the whitewash routine here has a sort of ghostly sadness, a reminder of Keaton, of Chaplin himself, of the great clowns who could make whitewash funny.

If one finds oneself withholding laughter, it is perhaps because Chaplin so often invites us to laugh not with but at *Shahdov*. Elements of Charlie have survived into the other characters he has played: the loneliness of *Verdoux*, the immense pathos of *Calvero*, carried on Charlie's great role of tragic comedian. Others may find King *Shahdov* a figure of pathos; and in the scenes with the boy, the practical, protective tenderness, one gets glimpses of the wonderful sadness of *Limelight*. But on the whole, the spruce, debonair king, surveying the world from a hotel room he is unable to pay for, pursuing his vague plans for improving conditions through the peaceful use of atomic energy, remains enigmatic. We laugh at his embarrassments, but they are those of a stranger.



"A King in New York".

This impression of remoteness persists through the film's technical shortcomings. It is a pity, for instance, that Berkeley Square should form such an instantly recognisable background to one scene; that the mob of angry revolutionaries attacking the king's palace in the opening episode should resemble nothing so much as an English shopping crowd besieging the counters on the first day of the sales. These things would not, I think, have mattered in any previous Chaplin film. He has often been charged with making his films badly, which as a rule has meant simply that he has not been concerned with technical effect. Everything that he wanted to express has found expression, and if style means the correct relationship between ends and means, then Chaplin has been in every sense a film-maker of style. If this relationship no longer seems to exist in *A King in New York*, then one must look beyond mere technical deficiencies for the reasons.

I have tried in this review to indicate what I think these to be: distance, withdrawal, uncertainty, a wasting of satirical ammunition on insignificant targets and a hesitancy before the big theme. Where *Limelight* seemed like a homecoming, a return to the scenes and places out of which Chaplin's art developed, *A King in New York* has about it the remoteness of exile. Without looking too closely into Chaplin's own situation, which is only the critic's business in so far as the film makes it so, we would perhaps have been naive, or at least optimistic, to have expected otherwise.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

Then and



Now

LEFT: Chaplin on location during the making of *The Gold Rush* (1925).

RIGHT: Chaplin as the exiled King Shakhov in *A King in New York* (1957).





SEVEN FROM THE PAST

The National Film Theatre's season of Japanese films, opening at the end of October, will give audiences in this country a first opportunity to see the Japanese cinema's treatment of the contemporary scene. In spite of the spectacular success of *Rashomon*, Japanese cinema remains largely an unknown territory; and the few Japanese novels published here, such as *Fires on the Plain* and *Snow Country*, have only stimulated curiosity about the cinema's approach to similar themes. SIGHT AND SOUND has already published studies of Kurosawa, Mizoguchi and Gosho, three of the directors whose work will be represented in the season. This article, by a correspondent in Japan, looks back to the pre-war Japanese film, the earlier talents and achievements of a cinema which remains "much in need of discovery".

Aspects
of the
pre-war
Japanese
cinema

J. L. ANDERSON

PIANO, violin, drums, saxophone and one of those three-string Japanese *samisen* were playing the old mood music of the pre-talkie era. On the screen was a silent, flickering *Chushingura*, that perennial tale of mass vendetta known in English as *The Forty-Seven Ronin*. This much was certainly familiar to anyone who ever made a trip to the silent cinema. But because this was a Japanese theatre, there was more than a picture on a screen and music from a pit. Up on the side of the stage sat a man who provided the film with running commentary and dialogue, reciting lines for each character so that the general effect was that of a poor man's 100 per cent talking picture, a kind of dubbing years before anyone had thought of dubbing. This man was a *benshi*, a fixture in every Japanese cinema during the silent period.

Whether it be the humorous stories of *rakugo* or the samurai superheros of *naniwabushi*, the tradition of professional story-telling in Japan is an old one, of which *benshi* were merely a late development. When the magic lantern first reached Japan in 1887, the showmen among the story-tellers "gimmicked" their acts with its projected slides. When motion pictures arrived ten years later, many story-tellers and audiences were already acclimatised to a visual accompaniment. Moreover, the first films, because they were shot in distant countries, contained subjects unfamiliar to newly opened, insular Japan. If there were no explanation, how could audiences know when they saw *The Tsar in His Carriage* that the Emperor of Russia was the man inside, not the one up in the superior position on the roof? By 1899, when the first half-reel Japanese dramatic films began appearing, the *benshi* was already an institution. He continued to explain foreign films to audiences supposedly unable to understand them; and the early films produced in Japan itself existed as little more than supplements to his spoken narrative.

The version of *Chushingura*, made in 1913 by Shozo Makino, reveals how severely *benshi* restricted the development of Japanese film technique. Griffith's films, for instance, were quite widely known in Japan by this time, but Makino, the nation's first important director, completely ignored the editing concepts developed by the American. Makino's only innovation—actors occasionally play directly into the lens in the manner of a television announcer—seems pointless, because a subjective camera was far beyond his ken. Until 1920, he never moved his camera from its front-on angle of a spectator at a stage play.

2

While Makino was still making simple illustrations for the *benshi*, the film technician Morimasa Kaeriyama became a director and in 1917 began to make pictures dedicated to three propositions: the introduction of long, medium and close shots, together with editing principles; the conversion to realistic acting; and the use of actresses in women's parts instead of *oyama*, the traditional female impersonators of stage and screen. Kaeriyama was not the first to use any of these in Japan—the close-up, cut-back and parallel editing were tried in 1909; actresses in 1911. His insistence on all three as essentials of film-making, however, helped to touch off a revolution in Japanese cinema.

By 1921, a few Japanese films, such as Minoru Murata's *Rojo no Reikon* (*Souls on the Road*), were ready

to compete with the best of the West. Of the two cross-cut stories making up this film, one deals with a prodigal who had left his father's house and now, poverty-stricken, is on his way back home with wife and child. The other tells of two ex-convicts newly released from prison who discover the kindness of ordinary people as they wander on an endless journey. These two situations were used by Murata not to show events or ideas in contrast, but to catch parallels in feeling among his characters. In this concern for the emotional tone of situations can be seen the origins of the mood film—a most significant Japanese genre in which emphasis is on the projection of an overall mood or atmosphere rather than direct narrative. In particular, Murata sought here to capture the components of what were for him the greatest forces in the world: love within a family and comradeship between men. These he preferred to examine not in the uncommon moments of high emotion of a carefully plotted film, but through characteristic incidents of an enduring period of hardship.

Filmed on location during early winter in mountain country, *Rojo no Reikon* placed its characters apart from the crowded world in a country of dead landscapes and overcast skies. At the centre of this vast isolation, Murata created a drama as intimate as though his characters were confined to a six-by-six room. He had no fear of moving his camera too close; and his players, with their natural make-up and veracious acting style, seem at least as close to life as the people in von Stroheim's *Greed*.

3

Murata and others who led the attack upon the cinematic old were often influenced by or came directly from the *shingeki* ("new drama"), the realistic movement in the theatre developed during the late 1900's in opposition to the traditional Kabuki and romantic *shimpa* ("new school"). *Shimpa*, itself a product of Meiji revolt, had moved in quickly to fill the gap left by the inability of Kabuki to present plays in contemporary settings. Even though it searched, *shimpa* never quite found realism. It compromised too often with the past and also retained such institutions as the *oyama* female impersonators. Soon its outlook became as firmly welded to the half new-half old Japan of the Meiji Restoration as the Kabuki's was to the three hundred year reign of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Only *shingeki* brought the realism and flexibility required by a modern Japanese theatre.

In the cinema, stories set in the past were dominated by crudely traditional acting derived from third-rate Kabuki; those in contemporary settings came under the influence of *shimpa* histrionics. An abdication of both styles came at the end of the First World War, when leaders of the technical advance turned reflexively to the *shingeki*. The two eternal divisions of the Japanese cinema—*jidai-geki* (period drama) and *gendai-geki* (contemporary drama)—both borrowed from the realism of the new dramatic school what they required to create an original and more subtle acting idiom.

Realism was the end of the *oyama*. Film actresses appeared in quantity after 1920 and within three years the screen was theirs. Not to be licked by the forces of revolt, the leading female impersonator, Teinosuke Kinugasa, joined them. As a director owning his own



Yasujiro Ozu's "I Was Born, But . . ." (1932)

company, Kinugasa was soon venturing beyond the new techniques to adapt the ideas of the French *avant garde* and the Russian montage specialists to indigenous settings. One of his greatest achievements came in 1928 with the impressionistic *Jujiro* (*Crossways*).

In *Jujiro*, a young man, thinking he has killed his rival in love at an archery ground, flees wounded to his elder sister and asks her help in escaping the authorities. She meets an official who undertakes to clear her brother, but kills the man when he tries to seduce her as an advance payment for his services. The brother by chance sees the girl he loves with the rival he thought dead; already weak from loss of blood, this shock kills him.

The film, a *jidai-geki*, opens with the brother running down a dark street, blood gushing from his face. He stumbles up to his second-floor room and collapses. From there Kinugasa pulls out the chronological stops as the wounded man becomes unable to distinguish the immediacy of the present from happenings of the near or distant past. Added to interspersed flashbacks, which slowly reveal the origins of the love duel, are other images as they come to his mind: his sister's tender care is reflected in shots of their childhood together; he suddenly thinks he is running down the street again; or the doors of the little room turn into targets and arrows come flying towards him. The pain he feels becomes a hallucination, in which the water he drinks changes to scalding steam. Coupled with these pictures from his imagination are the dark, real images of the room and its surroundings: his sister's frightened face in the shadows, or her cat attracted by his

open wounds.

Although he occasionally relied on photographic superimpositions, Kinugasa's basic unit for manipulation was the short, simple shot containing one small detail of motion. Just as he endeavoured in his story structure to anatomise pain, so too he tried to break down every action, however inherently complex, into each of its basic components. Instead of showing the full person, Kinugasa often dissected him into what the Soviets were calling "analytical montage", showing only such singular details as eyes, hands, or a piece of clothing.

To project the necessary gloom upon both camerawork and cast, Kinugasa worked only at night and had the sets (these were realistic in style) painted a dark grey. This prevailing drabness was admirably expressed in Kohei Sugiyama's low key photography, in what Kinugasa has himself called "a film of greys based on the *sumie*" (*sumie* are the Japanese monochrome paintings done in Chinese ink and characterised by a few all-inclusive strokes.) Sugiyama is the cameraman who won the photography prize at Cannes in 1952 for his black-and-white work on *Genji Monogatari* and later filmed Kinugasa's *Jigokumon* (*Gate of Hell*). Among Kinugasa's works, *Jujiro* is the more important since the *sumie* flavour was integral and did not have to be forced upon the subject as were the Japanese colour paintings in *Jigokumon*.

4

By the time *Jujiro* appeared, the Japanese cinema had completely assimilated the visual narrative methods and

sub-titles of the international silent film. But each theatre still retained its *benshi*, since the famed Japanese ability to accept the new is counterbalanced by an equally strong reluctance to discard the old. Film-makers themselves now ignored the useless verbal accompaniment, as did the more intelligent film-goers; yet the *benshi*, who had long outlived his function, survived until the coming of sound.

Although the first successful Japanese talkie was made in 1931, conversion to the new was by no means immediate. For the following three years, the nation's highest film award, the annual *Kinema Junpo* Best One prize, went to a trio of silent pictures all directed by the same man: Yasujiro Ozu. The director has explained his reluctance to make the change: "With everyone everywhere rushing into sound, I wanted to stage a last-ditch struggle for the silent film. I knew talkies would win when it was all over, but I wanted to hold off until the end so as to show how good silent films could be".

Umarete wa Mita keredo (*I Was Born, But . . .*), the *Kinema Junpo* Best One for 1932, shows the degree of Ozu's success. Without qualification, this film belongs to the great silent comedy tradition, but its approach is very different from that of most well-known Western artists of the period. Ozu took his humour from every-day life, untouched by a comic's hands; his films were built not around the antics of a comedian but out of the unconscious comedy of ordinary people.

Through the eyes of two brothers, eight and ten years old, Ozu here captures adult foibles and exposes middle-class habits with as much humour as Clair in *The Italian Straw Hat*. When their father scolds the brothers about something they think of as trivial, his stern face frightens until the camera pulls back to the boys' viewpoint—a ridiculously bow-legged creature with a fast moving mouth. And even while the father, following a health cult, arduously stretches muscle-building springs across his chest, he puffs heavily at a cigarette. In the final sequence, his employer's son invites the neighbourhood children over for home movies. Among the confused clutter of shots—neatly exploiting every known vice of home movies—are scenes in which the boys' father acts the clown for his boss's camera. Embarrassed, they later protest to their father about his vulgar behaviour.

Up to this point, Ozu has told his story in a directly visual manner. Now he feels that he must rely on sub-titles to make his point. The father explains that a family needs money to live and this is why he must both work for the boss and keep him amused. "But why aren't you the boss?" ask the boys. "Because I don't own a company like he does". "Will Taro (the employer's son) own a company when he grows up and shall we have to do the same things for him? And why, if we can beat him up anytime and do better at school?" For this the father and Ozu have no immediate answer. The next morning the brothers, as always, question Taro: "Who is greater, your father or ours?" Because of his oath to them as gang leaders, Taro must give the standard reply: "Yours". The camera cuts to a final shot of the father going out of his way to help his employer into a company car.

5

This very slight political tinge to *Umarete wa Mita Keredo* was in part a result of the "tendency" film movement in Japan, which early in the depression years led to the development of a realistic style openly oriented towards socialism. With adventures in Manchuria just around the corner, government censorship soon turned Japanese film-makers in other directions. The movement, however, left behind it a greatly sharpened respect for the real. In 1936 *Gion no Shimai* (*Sisters of the Gion*), the most successful of Kenji



Yamanaka's "Humanity and Paper Balloons" (1937).

Mizoguchi's pre-war films, presented a new style of Japanese realism which did not force the audience to draw political conclusions but implied a social comment that could not be ignored.

Mizoguchi's sisters are two geisha of the well-known Gion district of Kyoto. O-Mocha, the younger sister, is a *moga* (a derogatory portmanteau version of the English "modern girl") and is thus inclined to ignore the rules of both profession and society. Umekichi, the elder, possesses all the legendary geisha virtues. Despite the geisha code which authorises a girl only one patron, O-Mocha moves from one man to another in search of ready cash. When the business owned by Umekichi's patron fails, O-Mocha urges her sister to find a richer man; but Umekichi believes that both love and obligation demand her faithfulness. O-Mocha then convinces her sister's patron that Umekichi no longer loves him and his visits stop. Later, one of O-Mocha's friends, angry because she has thrown him over for a richer man, pushes her from a moving car.

If Mizoguchi's sentiments occasionally go by default to Umekichi, his conclusion leaves her condemned. Over-conditioned by code and her own stupidity, the elder sister will always be afraid to go against custom and take the initiative in renewing the liaison with her lover. O-Mocha, who would turn geisha into latter-day courtesans, at the end lies injured in her hospital bed, but with every chance of



Old-style and new-style geisha: Mizoguchi's "Sisters of the Gion". (1936).



Tasaka's "Five Scouts" (1938).

recovery; with every possibility of taking up again where she left off.

Unlike Kinugasa and Ozu, with their sharp cutting techniques, Mizoguchi preferred lengthier and more elaborate shots. This was due not to the technical limitations of the early sound film but rather to the special interest in the graphic arts which taught him the value of more intricate compositions: the effect he worked for was essentially that of a painting in motion.

Gion no Shimai was the most successful of a series of films made on location in which Mizoguchi tried to evoke the special atmosphere of his favourite districts of Japan. To project regional atmosphere is no easy task in a country like Japan, where smallness and centralisation conspire to make differences most subtle. Yet the narrow Gion alleys and the backrooms of tea-houses have never appeared more inviting. To the Japanese this picture is more than just a slice-of-life: it goes beyond documentation to convey the whole mood and quality of the Gion. To the foreigner this atmosphere in present-day settings is as visually and emotionally stimulating as that of Mizoguchi's later *jidai-geki*, *Saikaku Ichidai Onna* (*The Life of O-Haru*), *Ugetsu Monogatari* and *Sansho Dayu*.

These three post-war films by Mizoguchi, together with Kurosawa's *Tora no O o Fumu Otokotachi* (*Walkers on Tigers' Tails*), *Seven Samurai* and *Rashomon*, and Kosaburo Yoshimura's *Genji Monogatari*, have all been seen abroad and have been taken by some people unfamiliar with the Japanese cinema as representative of the average costume film—a thoroughly misleading assumption. Each is an unusual attempt to escape the deadly formulas of the conventional *jidai-geki* with its emphasis on violent sword-play and invincible heroes. All seven films are, in fact, experimental in form; *Rashomon* is about as *avant-garde* as one can be in Japan and is thus much closer to Kinugasa's *Jujiro* than to his *Jigokumon*.

6

In the thirties, before Mizoguchi, Kurosawa or Yoshimura looked to the past, Sadao Yamanaka was the only director consistently to bring an adult viewpoint to stories with a historical setting. Unlike this later trio, who found their material outside the usual territory of the *jidai-geki*, Yamanaka worked with the very stuff of which common sword operas are made. To him, however, the pre-Meiji era was not the usual romantic idyll but an age with its own human problems. This was heresy—not only to the popular

mind but to those militarists for whom the golden age of *bushido*, "the way of the samurai", was the road to Greater East Asia.

Yamanaka's objectives went beyond simple historical reconstruction, which to him meant merely cinematic *trompe l'oeil*. His interest in the life of the past was governed by a desire to show not only its physical appearance but the emotions out of which it was made. His dialogue, far removed from sword opera conventions and yet not too close to actual speech, aimed at the poetic. He was one of the relatively few directors able to focus on speech without sacrificing visual elements.

Although Yamanaka was in part a debunker, his attitude was realistic rather than openly satirical. His 1937 production *Ninjo Kami Fusen* (*Humanity and Paper Balloons*), opens with a characteristic sequence. The setting is an Edo tenement. One of the tenants, a *ronin* (samurai no longer in a lord's retinue, and hence without livelihood) has committed suicide. His townsman friends lament his death, but one romantic is disappointed: "He hanged himself like a merchant. Where was the man's spirit of *bushido*? Why didn't he disembowel himself like a real samurai?" And the reply comes: "Because he no longer owned a sword. He sold it the other day for rice". This is the familiar death-theme opening of so many *jidai-geki*, but a startling variation on the outnumbered samurai who comes to a glorious end taking twenty enemy swordsmen with him.

That night the dead *ronin's* sorrowing friends find happiness at his funeral: drunken wakes are the only luxury of their miserable lives. At the wake Yamanaka introduces these tenement dwellers one by one and the film develops into vignettes of their daily lives: the goldfish seller, the blind masseur, the street gambler, the noodle seller and, more particularly, another *ronin* and his wife. This is the celebrated Golden Age of the eighteenth century, but the people of this tenement are not part of its flourishing of the arts or its celebrated zest for living. The *ronin*, like his fellow tenants, searches daily for work while his wife endlessly makes paper balloons. This samurai lives not by bravado but by the small change received from the sale of toys to children. One day he accidentally becomes involved in a kidnapping unsuccessfully attempted by a friend. The next morning his wife's paper balloons are blowing out into the courtyard. The tenants look in the couple's room; the *ronin* and his wife have committed suicide. Once more a funeral; once more brief escape in the flowing wine of a wake.

Yamanaka, like almost every major Japanese director who got his start before the war, was under twenty-five when he directed his first feature. His career, which began in 1932, was cut short when he entered the army after the release of *Ninjo Kami Fusen*. He died in action on the central China front a year later at the age of twenty-nine.

7

The outbreak of hostilities on the Continent in 1937 caught the Japanese film industry unprepared: Japan had never developed a war film genre. The country's minor participation in the First World War and the earlier conflicts with Russia and China apparently failed to interest audiences or provide strong inspiration for scenarists. But the presence of actual war was something the film industry could not ignore.

Tomotaka Tasaka's *Go-nin no Sekkohei* (*Five Scouts*), made in 1938, was the first significant Japanese war film and set a pattern for several later pictures. Seen today, it is a totally unexpected experience since it shows nothing of the ultra-nationalistic fanaticism of contemporary militarist propaganda and lacks even the familiar warrior heroism of the *jidai-geki*. It would be difficult to find its counterpart among the war-time films made in Europe or the United States. Rather, one would have to look back to the films of the pacifist era which were banned in Japan; to Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Pabst's *Westfront 1918*.

In Northern China, a company commander sends five men out on a reconnaissance. On the way back, the patrol is attacked and only four return. While his comrades mourn, the fifth man comes in—he had become separated from them in the confusion. Soon orders come to move out for a general attack: this time they know that there will be no false alarms, that for some death is certain.

These Japanese soldiers are without any sense of mission, divine or otherwise. They are not for or against this or any war; they are simply caught up in the midst of hostilities. When the patrol is attacked, the men see nothing, experience only the terrifying effects of the enemy's fire around them (with some of the most horrific sounds ever recorded). In turn, the soldiers fire back into this impersonal void. The enemy is like a fire or a flood; and one does not hate the destructive forces of nature, one merely struggles against their power to destroy.

Tasaka's emphasis is on the details of which life is made up. Despite close comradeship among the soldiers, they are bored. They search for flowers they knew at home or try to discover something that suggests the floor mats of the Japanese house. The company commander is also a man caught up in war; his emotions resemble those of his men, but he has no comrade to whom he can reveal himself; he must remain always the figure that inspires confidence.

Tasaka's picture can be valued both for its technique and its essentially humanistic outlook. What seems wrong in retrospect is that Tasaka's philosophy was not big enough: the war in China involved problems larger than the survival of five soldiers and their captain. The soldiers' unquestioning acceptance of war presented an effective extension of the "it-can't-be-helped" doctrine so prevalent in pre-war Japan, which made those opposed to the military reluctant to go against what they considered a disastrous but inevitable flow of events. In a nation where obligation rather than feeling or reason rules the social order, it was not necessary to hide horror or to present a rationale for war; it was necessary only to show the populace what was required of them. Tasaka was certainly no chauvinist, but with *Go-nin no Sekkohei* he was the man who kindly gave the boy the pocket-knife with which he cut his sister. However, like most top-ranking directors, Tasaka avoided those extreme propagandist themes whose realisation fell to lesser talents.

Tasaka, Mizoguchi, Ozu, Kinugasa and the little band of slightly over a dozen others on whom the quality of post-war Japanese cinema depends (the quantity depends on the other hundred and forty currently active directors) are not men new to the medium nor artists suddenly flowering in their ability. Some, like Mizoguchi, went on to greater things in the post-war years; others, like Kinugasa, have left their best far behind.

The Japanese cinema has been established as long as the cinema has existed anywhere. In the past thirty years or so it has been much in need of discovery; if not represented by the seven films described here which I saw recently, then by any number of others. In the past, if the West had only looked—and it would have had to look hard, for quality is easily buried in the mediocrity of more than 13,000 features made since 1920—it would long ago have found that there was something new under the rising sun.



above: Kinugasa in the twenties:
"Crossways" (1928).

below: Kinugasa in the fifties:
"Gate of Hell" (1953).

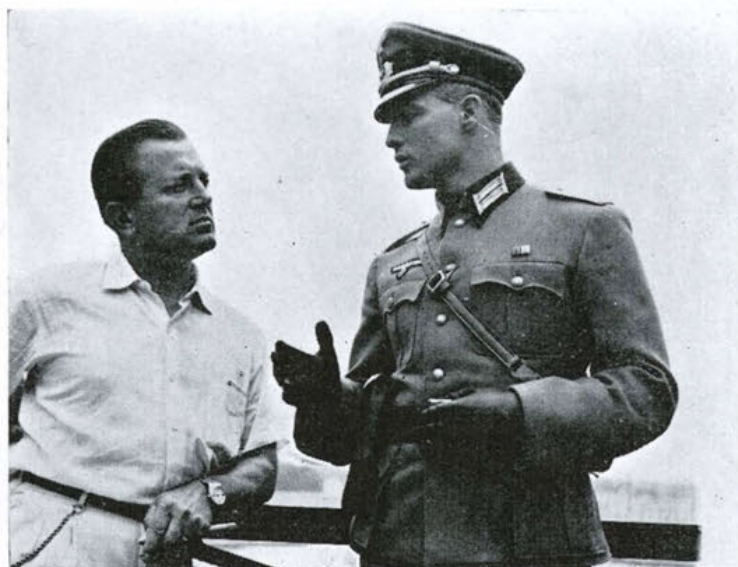


THE YOUNG LIONS

Edward Dmytryk's latest film is adapted from
Irwin Shaw's novel, "The Young Lions", about the reactions
to war of a young German and a young American.

above: Montgomery Clift.

below: Edward Dymtryk on the set with Marlon Brando,
who plays the young German officer. *right:* Marlon Brando.



Film Reviews

A FACE IN THE CROWD

SPECULATIONS about who was responsible for what in any given Hollywood film, though critically only partly relevant, are fascinating and inevitable. Who, one wants to know, liked the ending of *The Sweet Smell of Success*? The writer? The director? The front office? Who thought it necessary to have all that bloodshed in the last reel of *A Man is Ten Feet Tall*? And so on. Elia Kazan's films stand apart in this respect. He chooses his own subjects and collaborators and controls his work: what he says, we can take it, he wants to say. With a Kazan film it is nowadays no longer relevant to ask whether it "has brilliant things in it"; we have to ask whether it is good. We are not dealing with the manifestations of a talent but with the work of an artist.

A Face in the Crowd, written by Budd Schulberg, chronicles the life cycle of a popular hero—a guitar-twanging hobo with a line in homely patter who becomes a national figure on TV, comes to wield great commercial and political influence and ends up, in the final throes of megalomania, on the rubbish heap. Lonesome Rhodes, a great bull of a man combining the talents of a Will Rogers and an Elvis Presley, gives the public what it wants. Around his rise to fame, the film brilliantly builds up a picture of how the "corrupt brightness" (to use Richard Hoggart's phrase) of a hugely popular entertainment is achieved. Sensation is everything. Lonesome Rhodes does not play the guitar very well, but he plays it loud and strong. He extols the homely virtues with aggressive folksy humour. He applauds and plays on political ignorance. To all this and to the men behind it—the advertising agents and statistical experts, the press agents and political pushers—Kazan brings a sardonic mockery which strikes hard. There is a lengthy digression in the middle of the film when we are shown a burlesque TV show, which is very funny. Here the film is on sure ground and one happily watches it scoring its points.

But this is as far as Kazan can take us. *A Face in the Crowd* is not only about popular entertainment; it also is an entertainment. If we are to accept its attack on the jungle values of American sponsored television then we must be able to sense a more decent, rational tone in the film which is attacking them. And this becomes more and more difficult as the film goes on. When it comes to the test Kazan and Schulberg seem to have little more respect for their audience than the Television showmen. Dramatic scenes are all played at full blast, while the more intimate scenes are slurred over. When Lonesome is first discovered it is not enough that he is in prison—we must see him being kicked in the back by a warder; when he goes to see a display by drum majorettes, we get a good eyeful of the little girls in their tight rompers; Lonesome's final breakdown is staged with a sledge-hammer insistence totally irrelevant to the film. On the other hand, a key sequence between Lonesome's girl and an honest, disapproving writer, which is part love-scene, part statement of the film's attitude, is played in half-light, with the characters mumbling their lines apologetically in silhouette. The effect of all this is to coarsen the relationships, to push good dramatic situations over the edge into melodrama. All the time the film is saying decent and acceptable things it says them with a brashness which differs from Lonesome's not in kind but only in degree of sophistication.

As in *On the Waterfront* Kazan and Schulberg treat the crowd, on whose behalf they are making their plea, with a chilly indifference. There are perhaps half a dozen moments in Lonesome's career, when the script demands that we see his audience. On these occasions, the film cuts perfunctorily to some domestic scene in which, for a few seconds, we see viewers in their houses reacting as the occasion demands. The shots are carelessly staged and have a disturbingly anonymous feel about them—like lantern slides illustrating audience reaction statistics. They display the same

sort of contempt for the audience that Kazan and Schulberg showed for the silent dockers in *Waterfront*, and imply that the crowd will follow whatever the cleverest entertainers and politicians have to offer. This seems a strange attitude in a film which overtly attempts to expose a reactionary phenomenon, but the film's climax confirms that this indeed is what the makers want us to believe. When, in the end, Lonesome Rhodes loses his audience it is not because of anything he says or because they have grown weary of his gaudy exhibitions: it is because his psychotic condition is exposed to view. The social issues the film raises are answered by the people's idol going mad.

The opposing pull between the film's implicit attitude and explicit values is part of a pattern which we have seen before in Schulberg's novels. *A Face in the Crowd* re-states a theme which he has treated earlier in other *milieux*—in the sphere of professional boxing "The Harder They Fall" and in Hollywood "What Makes Sammy Run". In all of these he has been fascinated by the corruptions of the world he depicts and embodied them in a central character—Sammy Glick, the promoter in "The Harder They Fall", and now Lonesome Rhodes. Against them he pits a vaguely right-thinking opponent who knows what's wrong but is hopelessly outclassed. In *A Face in the Crowd*, there is a small-time TV writer who despises what Lonesome stands for but does not even attempt to stop him. In contrast with the idol, who is healthy, confident and successful, the little liberal is timid, shambling and can't get his girl. The only gesture he can make—a strangely revealing detail, this—is to write a book about the star's career after it is finished.

And this, too, is how the film works. Instead of implying their criticism of TV values through asserting their own, Kazan and Schulberg make a token gesture of protest, in which they have no faith.

KAREL REISZ

END AS A MAN and SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

END AS A MAN (Columbia) and *Sweet Smell of Success* (United Artists) show the machinations of two paranoid seekers after power, both the product and the enemy of their society. Both films avoid, however, any final consideration of *why* their characters are as they are, and what elements in their society nurture and encourage them. In *End as a Man*, the leading character is a sadistic corporal in a Southern Military Academy, an institution where a rigid aristocratic discipline is maintained. (At the mess table, for instance, a freshman must stiffen to attention when an announcement is read out, while a corporal may sloppily carry on uninterrupted with his meal.) This sadist, Jocko de Paris, has we learn, been demoted for excessive brutality to his squad and has since nursed a longing for revenge on the officer responsible. By a Macchiavellian but highly fortuitous manoeuvre, he secures the abject expulsion of the officer's son. His reign of sadistic refinements (these are always elaborately stage-managed and call for many extras) continues; and this is made more probable than it sounds by the fact that the exclusive Academy is attended mainly by morons and perverts. Jocko's chief cronies are a brutal Southern half-wit and a fawning homosexual engaged in writing his biography; his freshman victims include a religious prude who goes without a bath for two months rather than expose himself to his fellows in the shower.

To bring this parade of perversion to a close, the morons and sadists, having served their purpose in these roles, conveniently switch to a more familiar incarnation as mob-avengers and agents of democratic justice. Jocko is captured and revealed as a coward (we needn't admire him after all) and finally packed off by train screaming defiance in typical Cagney *fin de gangster* hysteria.

Critics can, of course, be wise after the event. But in fairness it must be admitted that while the events are happening they are often very compelling—and this in spite of the clumsy shape of the narrative. For, after the initial incident resulting in the dismissal of the officer's son, the rest of the film resolves itself into a loose elaboration of the consequences, ending in the artificial climax already mentioned. The film's power lies mainly in Ben Gazzara's performance as Jocko; and also in the fascination with which author (Calder Willingham) and director (Jack Garfein) survey their gallery of perversion. This communicates itself like a drug, and lasts for a few hours afterwards.



"Sweet Smell of Success". Left, Alexander Mackendrick on the set with Tony Curtis: right, Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis

In *Sweet Smell of Success* the principal monster is that all-American Frankenstein, the newspaper columnist who wields such power that all from President to chorus girl tremble at his approach and accept his vicious banter with bright, uneasy smiles. Swimming around this shark are the pilot fish—the publicity boys who offer their eaves-droppings for his approval and wait to earn their cuts should he decide to print them. Once again this power maniac is arid and withdrawn. This time it is his passionate sister-complex which motivates the main action: the determination to separate the girl (most sincerely played by Susan Harrison) from the man she loves. Good performances abound, but the outstanding one comes from Tony Curtis as the publicity agent anxious to achieve the ruthlessness essential to success in his ferocious milieu, but never consistently capable of it. Once again the film's atmosphere is as tense as a trap. It is beautifully shot in gleaming black and white (James Wong Howe) and written in a lucid, over-exposed one o'clock in the morning style by Clifford Odets and Ernest Lehman. And one is amazed that the sure hand behind this frightening piece of—surely—fantasy-Americana is our own Sandy Mackendrick. No British director since Hitchcock has displayed such a sure response to the American scene.

In *End as a Man*, the unifying element was an obsessive fascination with perversion; and of course any strong response, whether indignation, approval or fascination, is valid in the creation of a work of art. In *Sweet Smell of Success* the response is again strong and fascinated; but there is also distance, a sense of artistic perspective.

In most of the writing, Odets and Lehman manage to make the verbose, adjectival dialogue seem the natural idiom of their urban jungle. "I love this dirty town", says the columnist. Here, it is implied, is the life-beat of New York—a stinking, somehow marvellous rat-race leading up to the top brackets of success, "up there where it's always balmy". "This", the publicity agent declares, "is life, and you'd better get used to it". The columnist himself, though, is finally only a close cousin to the facile sophisticates of Clifton Webb. It is not entirely Burt Lancaster's fault that he cannot successfully show the obsessive attachment to his sister. The role is conventionally conceived, and only a personality actor bringing a great deal of himself to the part could lend conviction to such a bald outline. Mr. Lancaster honourably attempts to act what there is of it and invents a few *à propos* mannerisms; but these still fall short of a believable monster.

Two remarkable portraits of evil, then: Ben Gazzara's smouldering, insolent pervers and Tony Curtis's flashy, uneasy opportunist. Gazzara's performance is recognisably of the Method school, and he brings to it much of the approved contemporary *Weltanschauung* of its devotees: the tough chip on the shoulder, the sense of withdrawal behind a wall of watchful scorn. To interpret the role as brilliantly as he does calls for no intricate involvement with the world around him: the character he plays remains private, suspicious, aloof.

Tony Curtis's performance, on the other hand, is excellently conceived in terms of the present role. Its weak, eruptive irritations,

the insecurity behind the Yiddish bravado, the aggression with which he defends a morally untenable position to his secretary when both of them know better—all these aspects reveal a thoughtful and imaginative actor. This kind of playing, devoid of personality-salesmanship and "gimmicks", is close to the acting in the recent American TV adaptations. It clearly owes much to the Method, but seems to escape the dangers facing the Method actor working outside a dedicated team. Its "reality" is not reduced to a series of cannily observed moments; rather, it reaches down to the heart of the matter, to what Stanislavsky was pleased to call the "through line of action" of the part and the whole.

DEREK PROUSE

A HATFUL OF RAIN

HOLLYWOOD's social conscience has always expressed itself to some degree in terms of violence; and since the war violence, both physical and emotional, has increasingly pre-occupied filmmakers in proportion to its resurgence in American life and literature. From juvenile delinquency to race hatred, every symptom of emotional fascism has been studied and diagnosed. What such problem pictures have usually failed to show, beyond their quick recognition of the face of violence, is any real understanding of the overall, causative psychosis. Usually, this failure can be attributed to some loss of essential clarity. It may be a question of too many themes, however valid, being unsuccessfully assimilated into the plot structure and obscuring the main issue (*The Wild One*); or an initially humane spirit of enquiry may have given way to an element of exploitation (*Monkey on My Back*); or the direction may have too closely identified technique with subject matter (*The Man with the Golden Arm*). Although *A Hatful of Rain* (Fox) is in many ways the best of several recent films dealing with drug addiction, it still has not managed to look with sufficient clarity or penetration at its subject's intrinsic violence.

In America the problem of drug addiction is an urgent one; and this new film can be credited with being the first to place its nightmare fairly and squarely against an average, credible domestic background—Johnny Pope's standardised apartment in a huge new Manhattan housing lot. The basic situation is plausible. A Korean veteran who suffered prison camp brutality, Johnny became addicted to morphine in an army hospital and is now at the mercy of a sadistic young dope-peddler known as Mother. Johnny's pregnant wife, unaware of his sickness, has reached the point where she cannot bear his indifference towards her, his nervous outbursts and all-night disappearances. When Johnny's brother, Polo, declares his love for her, she agrees to leave her husband the next day. Before then, in an anguish of halting self-revelation, Johnny finds the courage to tell his wife and father the truth—Polo's savings have been exhausted keeping him afloat with narcotics.

The film builds up well from a terse and innocent beginning—Pop's arrival at the flat, his first meeting with Celia, his strange impatience to see Johnny and then their chance encounter in the street. Cracks appear almost imperceptibly in the surface calm. Johnny is apparently the favoured, reliable son, yet it is Johnny who is out of work, on edge, beaten-up outside his flat by three men; while Polo, discovered in the bar where he works as a bouncer, is the shiftless, unmarried drunk who promised Pop money he now hasn't got. Gradually familiar family stresses come into the open—qualms of loyalty, insecurity, failure and neglect. All this is admirable, and the acting is in key. Johnny, like the mood of the film, identifies himself slowly: it is some time before he can be fully recognised, in his self-abasement and pathetic reliance on others, as a fever-victim of Dostoevskian proportions. Don Murray gives a restrained, even inhibited performance which remains unusual and effective throughout. Celia's duologues with both brothers achieve a searching intimacy, subtly explored by Eva Marie Saint. And Lloyd Nolan, as Pop, is excellent.

That the film's weaknesses become apparent half-way through is due not so much to a heightening of tone (which is, after all, inherent in the theme) as to a sense of straining after stylised atmospherics. The eccentricities of Mother and his boys are conventionally overdone; and Polo's drunk scene, though informed with a striking brand of savage wit and Anthony Franciosa's formidable attack, nevertheless encourages this actor's tendency to externalise—to exploit the character's sharp irony and irrepressible bounce at the expense of its soft core of indulgence. From here to the end of the film, which relies shamelessly on a near-miscarriage as the final plot manoeuvre, realism takes second place to skilful contrivance. Admittedly the script, adapted by Alfred Hayes and Michael Vincente Gazzo from the latter's play, engineers its top-heavy material cunningly along these lines. Apart from a couple of colourless exterior scenes, we are confined to a single setting. We are gripped by the taut precision of the narrative, until the hair-spring mechanism snaps in an outcry of flagellant emotions.

To achieve this, however, the writers have fallen victim to their own compulsions, and to an eclecticism which is at one with these compulsions. Certain choice themes from *Death of a Salesman* and *The Rack* echo throughout with rueful opportunism, only to join a mainstream of equally familiar basic preoccupations. These are particularly detectable in pointed snatches of dialogue, in references to childhood loneliness, primitive orphanage punishment, ambivalent loyalties ("Get him out of here . . . if I didn't love him so much I'd kill him"). The compulsion, though real and important enough, is far too out of hand. The narcotics theme becomes virtually peripheral, little more than a hook to hang our nerves on. And consequently Johnny's future must seem as hazy as his past remains intangible.

The disinclination of the director, Fred Zinnemann, to control these elements is less surprising today than it might have seemed some years ago. Zinnemann's taste for the confined locale or personal situation was apparent in *Act of Violence*, *The Men*, *Teresa*, and *Member of the Wedding*. But while the first three of these revealed a disciplined talent and an acute observation of the American post-war scene, its problems and stresses, later works have suggested a certain fallibility of attitude to psychological or social reportage. *Member of the Wedding* had something of the restriction of a vacuum; *From Here to Eternity* the impotence of hysteria.

Following the latter, *A Hatful of Rain* would seem to confirm Zinnemann's complacency to a cult of growing popularity with young American writers—the cult of sado-masochism with its hints of bi-sexuality; and inevitably this can only limit the more sober, positive and sympathetic elements in a striking talent. The result is an ambivalence by no means rare in this kind of film. As an informed fiction dedicated to the tragedy of a junky, *A Hatful of Rain* is stylish but specious; as an exercise in romantic agony, it is impressive, ill-judged and way off its home ground.

PETER JOHN DYER

LES SORCIERES DE SALEM

SALEM, Massachusetts, in the 17th century saw itself as a fortress against the heathen and the Devil. In 1692 some of its repressed young girls were caught dabbling in witchcraft and accused local "witches" of leading them into it. The townspeople caught their hysteria and encouraged them to denounce their neighbours, many of whom were hanged before the fever died down.

In the Salem witch-hunt, Arthur Miller found a revealing parallel to the Red-hunt led by Senator McCarthy. By concentrating on the injustice and suffering involved, his play *The Crucible* also exposed the sinister mechanism which—no matter when or where—links authority with public spite and panic in the persecution of free-thinkers. With poetic dialogue and firm characterisation, he dramatised a universal tragedy.

Despite the excessive length (2½ hours) of his adaptation, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Sorcières de Salem* has lost Miller's poetry and insight into character. Worse, it sacrifices the concentration on a universal theme. From bare hints in *The Crucible*, Sartre has developed two subordinate themes which are, judging by the stress he lays on them, more to his taste: sexual conflict and the class war.

Miller's hero, John Proctor, is a farmer both admired and distrusted for his robust independence. Though he loves and respects his wife, her coldness has provoked him into a casual affair with the girl who ignites the hysteria and who eventually denounces him. He is too proud to save his neck by a false confession of witchcraft.

This is not enough for Sartre. In the film the frustrated Proctor comes to hate his wife and believe her capable of denouncing him. The casual affair becomes an obsession, and before his execution Proctor has an entirely new scene of passionate self-disgust with his mistress, in which he contemplates confessing and going to the devil in her company. There follows a bitter dialogue of love and hate with his wife until she says she loves him, restoring his self-respect and making him withdraw his agreement to confess. So even his martyrdom is tainted in the Sartre version.

Miller makes it clear that the persecutors are strong because they are sincere (or at least persuade themselves that they are) and are supported by public opinion. Sartre interprets their



Right: "Les Sorcières de Salem".
Yves Montand as John Proctor and
Mylène Demongeot as Abigail.

campaign on Marxist, anti-clerical lines as a plot by "les riches" against "la canaille", hatched with the cynical connivance of a minister hoping to re-impose his dwindling authority.

Miller sets the tone of fear and bigotry from the start, whereas Sartre devotes most of the first reel or so to the sex life of the Proctors. Nothing in the film matches the play's slow tightening of tension, which twice snaps as the girls break into raving and denunciation.

The play ends with Proctor being taken out for execution; the film not only shows the hanging, but throws in for good measure an abortive rescue attempt in Western style by the mob. It introduces, too, a lot of extra violence. Girls are whipped, thrown down, choked and struck in the mouth; a man is tortured; guns are brandished and improbably turned against the guards. One addition which should have been horrifying—the girls' diabolical rites in the wood—is so unimaginatively staged as to suggest St. Trinian's rather than a witches' sabbath.

With a script so distorted and cheapened, it would have been hard for any director to make a film worthy of the theme. Although his stage production of *The Crucible* was admired, Raymond Rouleau comes nowhere near doing so. Most of the acting is crudely theatrical, and the use of camera, lighting and cutting prosaic.

The best things in the film are the performances of three actresses. Sartre has made Elizabeth Proctor a cold, mournful prig, and Simone Signoret plays her as such, with a skill only emphasised by this departure from her usual style. Mylène Demongeot gives a vivid account of the precocious, ruthless Abigail, while Pascale Petit is even more frightening as the most frenzied of her entourage. Sartre's neurotic hero presents no difficulties to Yves Montand, who plays him with his familiar, cynical stoicism.

Dreyer set an exacting standard with his brilliant handling of similar subjects in *Day of Wrath* and *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. By comparison with those masterpieces, *Les Sorcières de Salem* is just a good play spoiled.

DERICK GRIGS

WOMAN IN A DRESSING GOWN

AN encouraging recent development in the American cinema has been the return to intimate drama, a desire to examine the personal lives of small groups of people and to make a kind of statement about them. The impetus given to this kind of film by the television play has been discussed elsewhere; and it is perhaps significant that a serious British experiment of this sort, *Woman in a*

Dressing Gown (A.B.-Pathé) first made its appearance, like *Marty* and *The Bachelor Party*, on the home screen. The work of a new producer-writer team (Frank Godwin and Ted Willis), it immediately fixes its narrative in a recognisable social milieu—a middle-class block of flats in London. Here we are introduced to Jim Preston (Anthony Quayle), a stolid, rather unimaginative office worker whose growing revulsion at the slovenly, disorganised habits of his devoted wife Amy (Yvonne Mitchell) has resulted in an uneasy liaison with his secretary, Georgie (Sylvia Syms). Following some violent domestic scenes, a combination of pity and guilt proves stronger than passion; and Jim returns to his wife and son, although the film suggests that they are fated to resume the awful routine of their previous existence.

The problems of such a subject are mainly twofold: it is of paramount importance that one should be made to believe in the dramatic validity of the main characters; also, much depends on the kind of emotional response the film-makers seek from their audience. And here some uncertainties in the writing, direction and playing result in the film appearing less sympathetic than it might have been. In an effort to escape the restrictive conventions of the television play, the director, J. Lee Thompson, has employed a very mobile shooting style, so that the camera is forever roaming in and around the (determinedly) cluttered flat, observing the characters from a variety of oblique angles. Unfortunately these stylistic exaggerations too often stress trivial details at the expense of the significant. Similarly, the balance of comic and tragic aspects in the story is occasionally miscalculated. The film has attempted, courageously, to analyse the emotions of a pitifully eccentric character: Amy is shown as a woman striving to save a marriage threatened by her inability to come to terms with her daily life. Though she is not as neurotically complex as the wife in *Come Back, Little Sheba*, her actions, following her husband's decision to seek a divorce, painfully reflect an almost pathological determination to retrieve the situation in the only way she understands. When, in consequence, the audience is invited to laugh at her vain attempts to prettify herself and, later, to watch her getting ludicrously drunk, it seems to me that the handling, lacking a sufficiently positive attitude towards the character, prejudices and weakens the pathetic implications of what follows.

Yvonne Mitchell, faced with a full-blooded and theatrically rewarding part, tends to overwork some frankly stagey 'business', though she often attains a genuine pathos, notably in quieter episodes such as the visit to the hairdresser and the sad, muted scenes with the husband. If the performance seems finally a little too calculated for comfort, the fault may partly be in the dialogue, which is direct enough but often echoes the conventional formulas of the West End stage. Anthony Quayle, as Amy's husband, successfully conveys an impression of inarticulate, baffled numbness; and Sylvia Syms, as Georgie, gives her best performance to date.

Despite the over-facile resolution of the last scene, one's final impression is of an emotional drama of considerable intensity; and the film's very willingness to concern itself with such an uncompromising subject gives it a special prominence in the contemporary British cinema. Like *Brief Encounter*, it raises some controversial moral issues (it is interesting, for instance, to speculate what would have happened to Amy if Jim had in fact gone away with Georgie), even though realism is sometimes obscured by a veil of artifice.

JOHN GILLET

SENSO (THE WANTON COUNTESS)

IT is extremely difficult to arrive at any final conclusion about a work like *Senso* (Archway) after only one viewing. In the first place *Senso* is not an easy film to grasp; and we have become too used to facility in the cinema to appreciate at first sight a film which has to be approached in the frame of mind in which one reads an important novel, rather than as a piece of ephemera to be seen and at once forgotten. Moreover, it is necessary to bring to the film some knowledge of Italy, past and present, in order to understand it fully and to see it in its proper perspective.

"Woman in a Dressing Gown".
Yvonne Mitchell, Anthony Quayle, Sylvia Syms.



The version shown in this country, however (under the title *The Wanton Countess*), adds immeasurably to the difficulties of a fair consideration of the film. The dubbing is terrible; and even in the scenes which were shot in English specially for this version, half the dialogue is unintelligible. Even before the film reached this country the Italian censor had insisted on alterations in the script and the removal of several scenes. Since then there have been further extensive cuts, amounting to some minutes' running time, and as inexplicable as they seem unjustified. Inevitably the structure of the film has been irreparably damaged; and the movement is jerky and often apparently inconsequential.

Based on a short story by Camillo Boito, *Senso* is set in 1866, during the occupation of Venice by the Austrians and the subsequent Italian War of Independence, culminating in the Battle of Custoza. It tells the story of the tragic love of a Venetian countess and a young Austrian lieutenant of the occupying army. The officer, weak and cowardly, is shot for desertion, and brings his mistress to disaster with him. It is a true historical film in the sense that the history is not just a picturesque background for a romantic drama. The characters are a part of their times; their actions spring from their environment and from the events which they themselves provoke or of which they are the victims. Visconti shows his heroes as the prisoners of their respective social classes, and in a situation in which their destruction is inevitable. The Countess Serpieri is unhappily married to a rich aristocrat who collaborates with the enemy to assure his position; Lieutenant Mahler, corrupted by the easy living of the occupation garrison, cynically makes the most of the moment, without concerning himself with the events that are going on around him. The Marquis Ussoni (a character who does not appear in the novel) represents the positive element in the film. He belongs to the rising force which organises popular resistance and the revolution army. If his part does not seem very important in this version, one must take into account the cutting of a scene, at Borghetto, before the Battle of Custoza, when the captain of the regular army refuses the support of the partisans. The absence of this key scene also makes the beginning of the battle a little abrupt and the reasons for the Italian defeat rather vague.

Through the behaviour of his characters Visconti throws light on an aspect of history; the reconstruction of history is used to lay bare reality. Primarily, therefore, the film is a piece of historical criticism. But this is only one part of it. The other—as in Visconti's other work—is the extraordinary refinement of style, the minute attention devoted to its structure. The two elements—form and content—were superbly balanced in *La Terra Trema*. Here it does not seem to me he has been so successful, though again it is impossible to come to any final conclusion after one viewing of this incomplete and badly dubbed version. Even so the film bears the authentic Visconti stamp; like all his previous work it has brought to the screen something wholly original and new, whilst remaining true to the themes he has previously developed. The direction itself is masterly; the décors, costumes and colours are in faultless taste. The elaborate angles and composition of the images show not only an aesthetic but a dramatic concern. The Custoza scenes, for example, and the execution of Franz, seen in extreme long shot, are in no way used merely as pictures. The battle, seen as a confused whole, conveys infinitely better than isolated close-ups the feelings of terror and of absurdity it is intended to arouse. Shooting the execution from above emphasises the inhuman and brutal character of the scene. Visconti maintains this distance, this wide scenic vision, which gives the scene its "spectacular" character—like an opera, as he himself pointed out.

In conclusion, mention must be made of Alida Valli who is, from beginning to end of the film wholly admirable. In a sustained performance, she incarnates the passion, confusion and final downfall of the Countess Serpieri with rare assurance. In contrast to her male partners, she is always in harmony with the general tone of the film—even equal to it in stature. Farley Granger has some good moments, but is not an ideal Lieutenant Mahler, since he cannot entirely rid himself of modern American characteristics which jar somewhat with the historical setting. In the Verona scenes, towards the end of the film, he is frankly bad. Massimo Girotti, in a less sustained role, is hardly convincing, but he more than anyone has suffered from the bad dubbing.

Yet, despite its weakness, *Senso* is a film whose importance cannot be questioned. However inferior it may be to *La Terra Trema* it can only strengthen Visconti's position as one of the major directors of the contemporary cinema.

ALAIN TANNER

"The James Dean Story"

THE JAMES DEAN STORY

OF all the strange phenomena to which the mass idolatry of the cinema has given rise, few equal the James Dean legend. Dean was killed when only one of his three films had been released; and it was not until several months after his death that the cult began to grow to the strange proportions it eventually reached. The excesses are not entirely explained by the purely romantic interest of the actor—his indefinite sexiness, his violent and youthful death—nor by his undeniable talent. It was more that Dean found a striking sympathy between his own temperament and background and the parts he was called upon to play; and through them he was able to strike, very accurately, some characteristics of his whole generation.

The James Dean Story (Warners), directed by George W. George and Robert Altman, and scripted by Stewart Stern (who wrote the screenplay for *Rebel Without a Cause*) is a contribution and a stimulus to the legend. The film breaks new ground by its purely documentary approach; the way with show-business life-stories has always previously been to avoid using the least fragment of authentic material (for *The Buster Keaton Story* even some of the comedian's classic slapstick was, disastrously, re-staged). Apart from a few staged details (most of them unsuccessful) all the material in this film is documentary—stills of Dean at various stages of his life, shots of the places in which he lived, interviews with the people who knew him and worked with him, a tape recording he made of a conversation with his family, a screen-test for *East of Eden*. The weakness of the film arises from the attempt to spin out this material—enough for a good thirty-minute short—to feature-length. In its repetitive analysis of Dean's personality and problems, its overlong interviews and excessive use of stills, the film becomes from time to time tedious, and is forced into pretentious over-writing.

At the same time, it makes surprisingly few concessions to the fan-following. Apart from a rather embarrassing sequence dealing, apparently, with the Pier Angeli affair, and interviews with two young actresses who were somewhat fruitlessly 'dated' by Dean, there is no attempt to manufacture a 'love-interest'. Even the presentation of the rather morbid details of Dean's dreadful death is done with reasonable tact.

The film really convinces you that it is a serious attempt to probe the character of this extraordinary, talented and undoubtedly tormented young man, with his self-confessed longing for someone to love and for flamboyant success, his sense of isolation and of parental deprivation. If it rarely gets further than a lot of words, it is probably because Dean's real problems, socially and psychologically were at once too involved and too familiar for this sort of discussion.

DAVID ROBINSON



In Brief

MANUELA (*British Lion*) and **ACROSS THE BRIDGE** (*Rank*). The stars, stories, settings and treatment of both these new British films indicate a determination on the part of the producers to invade the American market. But despite the repeated statements that Americans like their British films to be British, in both cases the film-makers seem to have aimed at giving them imitations of the kind of thing they themselves produce.

Manuela, easily the better of the two films, concerns the love of a middle-aged ship's captain for a 17-year-old stowaway, which leads him to neglect a threatened fire until it is too late to save the ship. In the version shown in the West End, he realises that the disparity in their ages cannot be bridged, gives the girl up and sends word to her that he is dead. An alternative "happy" ending was shot for the American market and for possible use in the general release version in this country.

Guy Hamilton's direction, particularly crisp and confident in the tense fire sequences, makes the scenes between the captain and the girl and again between the captain and the neurotic first officer (sensitive played by Donald Pleasence) unusually believable. Indeed, the characterisations are generally far nearer conviction than in most recent British work, though an intermittent refinement prevents consistent authenticity. The film's greatest asset is Trevor Howard's performance as the captain, disillusioned and nagged by his need of purpose. Elsa Martinelli is barely adequate as the waif and Pedro Armendariz makes the engineer who smuggles her aboard less human than the script deserves. Some rather ragged construction, finally, emphasises an uneasiness in the combination of violent action and sensitive emotion.

Across the Bridge, adapted from a Graham Greene story, is almost as assured but has rather less point. A crooked financier escaping to Mexico changes place with his double, accidentally encountered on a train. He discovers that he has adopted the identity of a political assassin, and exposes the real revolutionary after tricking an American into driving him across the border and claiming the reward on the rebel's head. Not until this point, when coincidences and contrivances have been rashly accumulated, does the plot pause to allow a situation to develop naturally; the sequences in which the financier is refused food and shelter by the peasants whose hero he has betrayed contain the nucleus of a worthwhile film. But more dramatic machinations are hastily introduced to provide a preposterous conclusion.

Again the surface is highly polished. Ken Annakin's direction has seldom been so competent, though the Clouzot-like relish he brings to the more unpleasant scenes and details is sometimes disturbing. He seems to have been able to do little to subdue Rod Steiger, whose performance is as studied, self-conscious and contrived as the script.

The enthusiastic reception which both these films have received in the national press seems to indicate that slickness has for so long been a stranger to British production that evidence of it is now considered exciting, regardless of the material on which it

is employed. Competence in treatment and technique is certainly worth having; but to hail it as an achievement in itself seems hardly likely to encourage the overdue search for worthwhile themes.

DEREK HILL

LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON (*A.B.-Pathé*) "A comedy in the Lubitsch tradition", Billy Wilder has said of *Love in the Afternoon*; and from this comment one could look forward to something frivolous, sophisticated and engaging. After all, Wilder had written some of Lubitsch's most amusing comedies (*Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, *Ninotchka*, etc.) and his stylish cynicism promised to lend itself well to the film's story of an ageing *roué* brought to heel by a young innocent. What finally emerges, however, is less of a Lubitsch confection than a Wilder concoction—wry, overlong, slightly uncertain in mood and only intermittently amusing.

Scripted by Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond, the story concerns an amorous, ageing American in Paris (Gary Cooper) who is saved from the wrath of an outraged husband by the timely intervention of a young girl (Audrey Hepburn). In order to stimulate the American's continued interest, the girl adopts a pose of jaded sophistication. Thoroughly perplexed and bewildered, he finally hires a private detective (Maurice Chevalier) to investigate her, unaware that the detective is in fact the girl's father. Learning her true identity, the American lightly rejects her; but later changes his mind and takes her off to Monte Carlo, with her father sadly waving goodbye from the station platform . . .

Filed entirely in France, in black-and-white and for relatively small screen proportions, the picture's opening scenes set a deft pace which its extreme length makes it hard to sustain. For all its surface buoyancy, at just over two hours running time the comedy seems top-heavy and over-elaborate, moving uneasily between cynicism and sentiment. Some of the humour—particularly a magnificent quartet of gypsy musicians hired by the American to provide "mood" music for his amorous activities—strikes exactly the right note of light sophistication. The stylish performances of Audrey Hepburn and Maurice Chevalier are also in keeping. Only Gary Cooper's tired and muffed playing tends to throw the balance off-centre; and without charm in this role, the final scenes can only appear a dubious happy ending. "I think *Love in the Afternoon* will be my most romantic film", Wilder has said; and one can accept that he may be enough of a cynic to believe this.

JOHN CUTTS

MITSOU (*Regent*) is a lightweight French film that affords amiable supper-time entertainment. Directed by Jacqueline Audry, based on "the famous novel by Colette", it sets out urbanely to revamp *Gigi* and those other pieces of like format with titles one finds one can no longer call to mind. The background this time is a tatty music-hall during the 1914-18 war. An elderly financier (Fernand Gravey) has provided the management with its star performer (Danièle Delorme), naming her Mitsou after the initials of his other private enterprises. Her contract permits her to entertain admirers in her dressing-room, a privilege denied her less-compromised colleagues. Finding her best friend embarrassed by the visit of two breeched-and-booted gallants, crisply laundered in shades of khaki and blue, Mitsou obligingly stores them both in her wardrobe. She falls in love with the blue one, a sloe-eyed snob who leaves her when she orders mayonnaise with the lobster curry. Her protector puts her on a course of interior decoration, manège (side-saddle), and love-letter-writing; then fades out in a mist of altruism, leaving Mitsou to rush to the hospital where her blue boy lies wounded and pining in his private ward.

Many of the scenes are directed with ease and lightness, in particular, the happy grotesquery of the cabaret numbers, and Mitsou's dinner with her girl-friend, when four courses are disposed of in as many minutes. Danièle Delorme is touching and true, and Fernand Gravey partners her with the same dry, ruefully avuncular authority he brought to *La Ronde*. But not even these accomplished performers (together with Gabrielle Dorziat as one of half-a-dozen "guest stars") can overcome a general feeling of insubstantial anecdotalism. There is too much *démodé* Character Work, broad, pedantic, familiar, right down to those nervous soliloquies and the last moue. Inevitably this leads to an attitude of patronising indulgence and cloying affection; and a sharper sense of style was needed to give the film coherence.

PETER JOHN DYER



"Mitsou".

ROY EDWARDS

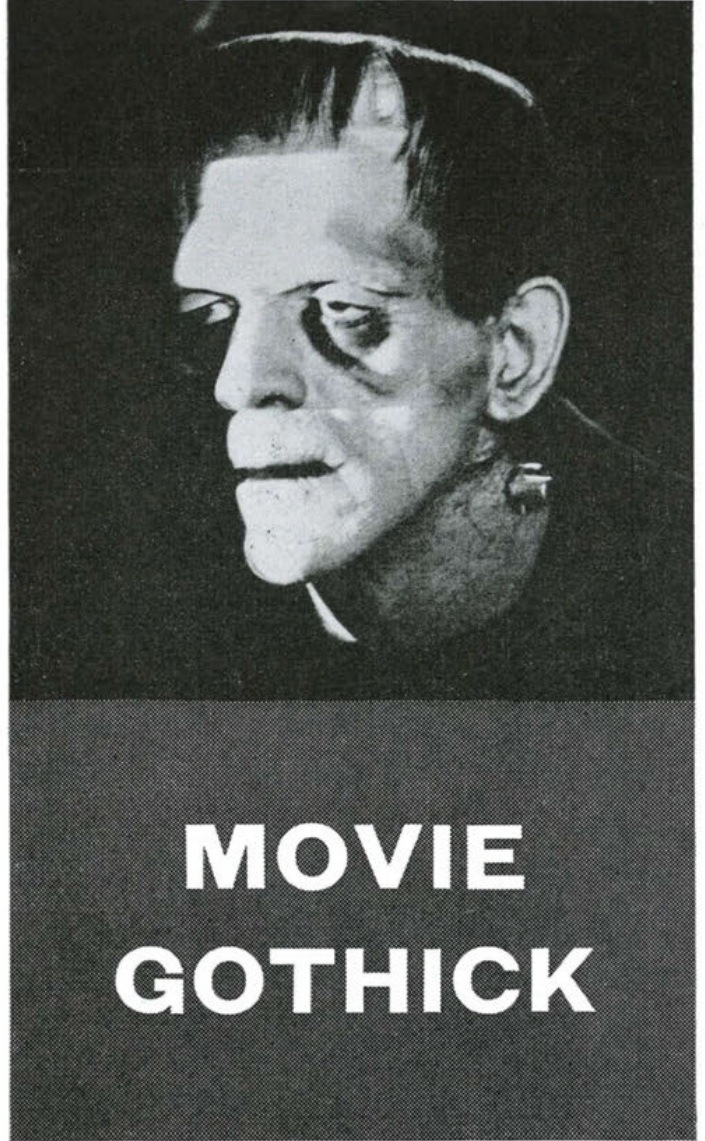
A tribute to James Whale

JAMES WHALE, who was born in Staffordshire in July, 1896, and died in Hollywood after a fall into his swimming pool earlier this year, though not an "eccentric" was certainly an extraordinary Englishman. He began his career as a cartoonist, working for *The Bystander*; during the 1914-18 war he was an officer in one of the county regiments and began acting in 1917 while a prisoner of war; and 1918 found him appearing in a production of *Abraham Lincoln* by the Birmingham Repertory Company. His career in the 1920's was entirely theatrical: stage manager at the Savoy Theatre, three more years of acting and designing sets for various productions including *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Seagull*. In 1928 he left acting to produce and design R. C. Sherriff's *Journey's End*. As nobody else would touch this play, Whale produced it on a percentage basis, a piece of enterprise which brought him financial and other rewards.

Journey's End, in effect, became the pivot on which the stage of his life turned round, since in 1929 Whale left for Hollywood to make a screen version of Sherriff's play. Except for brief visits to England (the last in 1952 to Bath, for a play which he originally produced in Pasadena) he lived in West Coast America for most of the remainder of his life.

In their *Histoire du Cinéma Américain* (1955), René Jeanne and Charles Ford wrote: "Quoi qu'il en soit, ce qui est certain, c'est que les studios hollywoodiennes mirent en circulation beaucoup de films de mystère et d'angoisse au cours des années 30". Though "mystère" and "angoisse" are perhaps slightly highflying terms, this remark pinpoints an important aspect of that Hollywood in which the elegant Englishman Whale found himself: an aspect which, once discovered, he developed in his own way.

Caligari, *Nosferatu*, *Vampyr*, *Golem* and most of the other films of "mystery" and "anguish" produced in Europe in the 1920's belong, as much as *Strike*, in the files of the "classic" cinema. By and large, they also represent the cinema's first great school of horror. In the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, however, this tradition passed (and for many people was thereby hopelessly vulgarised) into the streamlined hands of Hollywood. A picture like *Dracula*, directed by Tod



Browning and starring Bela Lugosi, seems, emotionally at least, like a kind of mutant film, a container in which the Hollywood and German-type *mystiques* struggle and come eventually to symbiotic terms.

Browning, with Karl Freund as his cameraman, made *Dracula* for Carl Laemmle and Universal in 1931. This studio had scheduled for production in the same year a script by Francis Edward Faragoh and Garrett Ford, to be directed by Robert Florey: *Frankenstein*. Florey, who describes the Whale of those days as "the ace of Universal", had, as he recalls in his *Hollywood d'Hier et Aujourd'hui*, to be satisfied, with a script based on Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* since Whale asked to be allowed to direct *Frankenstein* and Laemmle gave him the script.

2

When Shelley and his wife Mary, Byron and his physician Polidori, organised themselves a competition by the Lake of Geneva to see who could write the best tale of horror, only Mary became sufficiently involved to finish her tale. (Polidori produced a fragment called, pleasantly enough, *The Vampyre*.) Her story was based on her dream of a student of the "unhallowed" arts who attempted to create a human being but succeeded only in producing an extra-human monster; and she could not have suspected how fertile this image that she had dropped into the world would prove in its time to be. Least of all could she have imagined the kind of 20th century transformations for which James Whale, in the first instance, was largely responsible.



The Invisible Man (1933). Claude Rains.

In an article called "A Family Tree of Monsters" (in *Film Culture*, January, 1955) William K. Everson has written: "The whole reign of terror commenced back in 1931 when both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* made their initial appearance"; and Whale's creation certainly deserves to be considered as a root of the tree in Everson's title. His work, however, has none of the misty poetry that sometimes marks Tod Browning's film. He prefers to be grotesque, cartoonishly "Gothick" and eminently theatrical—"theatrical" not in the sense that one feels he has filmed a stage production (on the contrary, his camera is often exceedingly mobile) but in the sense of "red curtain".

In this first of the *Frankenstein* films, Whale has young Frankenstein (played by Colin Clive) creating his monster with the assistance of a monstrously deformed servant who does most of the dirty graveyard type of work, and at the same time causing some distress to his friends and his old father the Baron by these "scientific" pursuits. After the spark of life has been fanned in the Monster, he grows obstreperous and his freedom has to be restricted, while Frankenstein returns to his family and his forthcoming wedding. Set against his tower, his apparatus, his thunder and lightning, the unbelievably fake central European village life to which he returns seems doubly ridiculous. We are lost among "jolly" peasant junketings, a back-slapping father, sickeningly respectful servants, and a fiancée (Mae Clarke) who remains, just as she did in her lover's more grotesque surroundings, a marvellously imperturbable heroine of 1930. While the festivities are in full swing, the Monster escapes and kills a little girl. (She shows him how to throw flowers into a river and watch them swirl away; he joins in the game and ends by throwing her into the river; apart from its obvious pathos, this sequence seems as full of conceits as a metaphysical poem.) In fury, the villagers hound the Monster to his death in a burning mill; and Frankenstein returns to a world of domestic bliss where, or so it appears, he will not again be troubled by monsters.

Just as it is impossible to believe that Tom or Jerry or Sylvester will really suffer through any of the astonishing wounds they receive in their cartoon massacres, so it is impossible to believe that Frankenstein's monster could die. In 1935 Whale brought him back from the shadows, un-

harmd by the burning windmill, to slouch his way through another freak show. That this movie was called *The Bride of Frankenstein* has only helped to heighten that ineradicable confusion whereby the word Frankenstein summons to mind the image of the Monster itself, rather than that of the human creator to whom it rightfully belongs.

In *The Bride* Frankenstein encounters Dr. Pretorius, who is also interested in "unhallowed" matters and has in bottles homunculi versions of "a bishop, a queen, a ballerina and a mermaid". In a peculiar way he attempts to humanise the Monster by teaching him to drink, smoke and talk, and finally by forcing Frankenstein (now Baron) to help him create a wife for his monster. The resulting companion is so repelled by her mate that she upsets him and, in despair, he blows up everybody except the human Frankenstein and his human bride, who again escape to their own life.

In this production Colin Clive still played Frankenstein but his fiancée (turned Bride) this time provided an early part for Valerie Hobson. No one could have bettered the performance of Ernest Thesiger (an old friend of Whale's) as the extraordinary Dr. Pretorius. Perhaps the most fabulous aspect of this film, though, is Elsa Lanchester's visitation as the Monster's mate. A newspaper at the time reported an interview with her that gives a fine sense of the period and its atmosphere: "Elsa herself tells me that the experience of being encased from head to foot in about two miles of linen . . . was terrifying. For three days, propped up on the set like an embalmed ghost or lying gracefully in a coffin, she lived in a sort of cataleptic trance, unable to talk or move. . . . 'It was no use yelling or fighting against it', she said to me. 'The only thing to do was to relax and trust in Universal, James Whale, Uncle Carl Laemmle, and all'."

In both these films, Whale's interpretation of his theme is always anti-mystical. Quite frequently, in his incredibly bathetic central European settings, for example, or in his use of Elsa Lanchester not only as the Monster's mate but also as Mary Shelley in the Prologue (which is in itself a skit on the story's original conception), he seems to be deliberately caricaturing it. In spite of all this, when the Monster is brought to life in *Frankenstein* to the accompaniment of a superbly Wagnerian storm, and when his story is wonderfully continued in *The Bride*, one of the most potent figures in all horror movies was given a firm start. And Karloff's

Valerie Hobson and Boris Karloff in "*The Bride of Frankenstein*" (1935).





The Old Dark House (1932). Left to right: Raymond Massey, Lilian Bond, Gloria Stewart, Melvyn Douglas, Boris Karloff, Charles Laughton and Eva Moore.

legendary Monster is the one figure that receives none of the director's gibes. He lurches and mouths, is awkwardly terrified of fire; but in comparison with his dotty human entourage he remains curiously noble, sad and pathetic.

3

In the years between *Frankenstein* and *The Bride*, Whale directed two other films in the horror genre: *The Invisible Man* (1933), based on H. G. Wells's novel; and *The Old Dark House* (1932), adapted from J. B. Priestley's *Benighted*. Although they played no part in the creation of movie myths on the Frankenstein, Dracula or Werewolf levels, they are both extremely interesting as expressions of the director's standards in horror.

The Invisible Man, it is true, bears some family resemblance to the Frankenstein films, since the Invisible Man himself (Claude Rains) is a figure whose mythical possibilities, though latent and undeveloped, seem potentially as rich as those of the Monster.

The Man has invented a drug with which, in its experimental stages, "a dog was injected and turned white like a statue". In its final form the drug gives invisibility; and the Man, having taken it, seeks refuge in a village while he tries

to discover an antidote. He succumbs to megalomania, forces his ex-colleague to help him, and sets out to terrorise the world into capitulation. Murders, the wrecking of a train, mental demoralisation, are his weapons. But he is traced to a hay-filled barn in a snow-covered countryside and the police set fire to his refuge. The smoke wakes him and drowsily he flings himself from the barn; his footprints appear in the snow, the police shoot at the space above and the snow is disturbed as he falls. Only when he dies in hospital does he "return" physically.

Whale's offbeat humour reappears in this film: the policemen are not stupid but, although they win in the end, all their moves seem pathetically ineffectual as the Man hurtles amongst them, flinging gibes from the invisible pedestal of his would-be godhead. And this grotesque humour goes hand in hand with a sort of hypnotic magic. The tricks necessitated by the Man's invisibility are brilliantly managed and, except on a few rare occasions, completely integrated: a bandaged head wearing dark glasses appears; gloved hands come up and unwind the first layer of bandages; those underneath fit the face and look like a soft, bleached and broken skull. These, in turn, are unwound from the globe of an invisible head. . . . Nothing-

ness rebandages itself, replaces the dark glasses, puts on a silk dressing-gown and hierarchically stalks away.

In *The Old Dark House*, the earlier of these two films, Whale presented what is perhaps his finest personal distillation of the bizarre. A party of travellers—including Charles Laughton as a Manchester magnate accompanied by a chorus girl, who is loved in turn by a sensitive young man who thinks his malaise can be cured by marrying her—seek refuge from a storm in an old, dark house. They are received by Ernest Thesiger and Eva Moore as Horace and Rebecca, a crazy brother and sister. These are supported by Karloff as a dumb and lecherous butler; their father is aged 102 and bedridden; their younger brother (Brember Wills) is a pyromaniac confined to his room. The butler gets completely drunk and lets the flamehappy monster loose, and in a fantastic fight both he and the butler are overpowered. “At last”, as a vintage publicity handout remarks, “the nightmare hours bring dawn—and romance, too!”

With his cameraman Arthur Edeson and his scriptwriters Benn Levy and R. C. Sherriff (who also scripted *The Invisible Man*), Whale concocted a tremendous thunderstorm, roads swirling like rivers, an eerie house with a chinese-box series of horrors, old age, muteness: it all adds up to as thorough a display of grotesquerie as that which Tchelitchev put on to canvas during his *Phenomena* period. It is a fascinating display of Gothick; but, unlike those early 19th century novels which horrify by ghosts which are eventually explained away, all the Night-Side-of-Nature in *The Old Dark House* is created by monsters who, in spite of everything, are definitely human.

4

James Whale began working in Hollywood in 1929 and did not retire from the cinema until early in the war, after which he apparently gave his time largely to painting.



Besides *Journey's End*, and his work as assistant to Howard Hughes on *Hell's Angels*, he had more than a dozen films apart from the horror pictures to his credit. But only someone who has gone regularly to the cinema for at least two decades could now hope to know what all these were like. As a director working in the framework of a large commercial studio, Whale's films stand less chance of survival over a period of years than might have been the case had they been made in more exotic circumstances.

His other films included a *Man in the Iron Mask*, *Green Hell*, *The Road Back*, from a novel by Remarque, and, nostalgically in contrast to his darker side, the Paul Robeson-starring *Showboat* of 1936. Eric H. Rideout, in *The American Film* (Mitre Press, 1937) devotes half a page to Whale, emphasising the fact that he was an Englishman who had managed to achieve Hollywood success. He mentions such films as *Kiss Before the Mirror* (Karl Freund as cameraman), which he considers an “impressive study in the European manner”; *By Candlelight* (“delightfully witty rendering of a clever play”) and quotes part of the *Times* review of *Remember Last Night*: “There is Miss Sally Eilers, who is drunk and takes poison, and Miss Constance Cummings, who is also drunk but does nothing about it. There is Mr. George Meeker whose general inertness is, on the contrary, not due to drink but simply to death”.

It is momentarily disappointing that one is unable now to see these films, but a high mortality rate is an integral part of the machinery that allowed them to be made in the first place. It is also true that if these had been Whale's only productions, however efficient and pleasant they may have been, his screen career and death would have been no more worthy of special remark than those of innumerable other fairly routine directors. James Whale is mainly cherishable today for his Frankenstein's, *Old Dark House* and *Invisible Man*, even though these may not have seemed to be very important either to him or to his critics. In them he supplied a sort of ABC of monsters: human in *Old Dark House*, superhuman in *The Invisible Man*, while Frankenstein's great creation, despite its construction from physical human fragments, is an extra-human monster.

The tradition of horror whose birth Whale witnessed and whose position he helped to establish has sometimes gone underground but has still survived more or less healthily for over a quarter of a century. In its turn, Whale's “family” monster has produced, amongst others, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, *House of Frankenstein*, *Ghost of Frankenstein*, and *Curse of Frankenstein*. Finally, to follow in the footsteps of the extraordinary, *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (in which the Central European peasant appears as the janitor of an American police station), *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein* is now apparently being made. Further British additions to the Frankenstein and Dracula legends are also scheduled for imminent production.

Marcel Brion, in his study of Léonor Fini, has remarked that, with atomic disruption and advances in cybernetics to feed on, a modern concern with monsters, organic or mechanical, is not gratuitous. In the hallowed ground where many more movie totems of horror are, however rakishly, being planted, those that Whale adorned with his macabre and Gothick humour run no risk of being ignored or forgotten.

James Whale, about 1930, “the ace of Universal”.

LESTER PERIES

A Film-maker in Ceylon



"Rekāva": mysterious healing powers are attributed to this boy, who is persecuted by superstitious villagers when they fail.

Lester Peries is the director of "Rekāva", shown at this year's Cannes Festival. A study of village life in Ceylon, of custom and superstition, it is the first feature from Ceylon to get an international showing and also, as its director describes it in this article, "the first authentically Sinhalese film".

WHEN *Rekāva* (*The Line of Destiny*) was first screened in Colombo, practically everybody remarked that it was the first authentically Sinhalese film. In a way this was a curious observation to make in a country which had been producing Sinhalese films for ten years. During this period, 42 films were made, mostly in South Indian studios. The

backgrounds were painted sets which labelled the exquisite landscapes of the island. The directors were Tamil and had little knowledge of life in Ceylon. Inevitably, therefore, the Sinhalese film became almost indistinguishable from the Tamil film. The costumes, the thick impasto make-up, the heavily theatrical style of acting, even the stories, derived from the box-office successes of South India and conformed to the conventions of the Madras film industry. In fact the Sinhalese film was Sinhalese in speech and in nothing else.

A convention was established in which the Sinhalese cinema rarely or never portrayed the actual life of Sinhalese



"*Rekava*": fortune-teller and village children.

people, their customs or manners. But the audiences, fed for ten years on the same formulas, obviously liked what they saw, to judge at least by the box office success of most so-called Sinhalese films. The other convention, equally rigid, and strongly maintained by the financiers, was that you could not make films 'out-of-doors' in Ceylon. Of course there was plenty of sunshine, they would admit, and a dignity and grandeur in the local scene; but surely you could paint all this better in a studio? Besides, ordinary people and human stories were, they insisted, thoroughly unsuitable material for motion pictures.

This was our challenge; a challenge artistic as well as technical. Would our film-goers be interested to see their own lives portrayed on the screen against the natural setting? Would it at least make a change for them? Would they want what SIGHT AND SOUND once described as 'true'? Could we shoot and record (there were no facilities for dubbing the dialogue later in the studio) our entire picture on location? Then, of course, there were the other conventions of the oriental cinema to be met. If the film were less than 2½ hours long no distributor would touch it; unless one wished to court disaster at the box-office, the narrative had to be interspersed with the appropriate number of songs.

Three of us, at the time all working in Government documentary—William Blake, a cameraman, Titus de Silva, an editor, and myself—felt it was worth risking our jobs to accept the challenge. A new company had to be formed, outside the normal production channels, with directors and financiers who not only had confidence in us, but shared our vision.

The choice of milieu and people . . . this was easy. If our film was to be genuinely national, it must have its roots in the village and the life of the peasant. For here time had stood still; the manners and customs of the village community had not altered in generations. But where could we find a story? There was nothing in contemporary literature which could be adapted for the screen. Our novelists wrote

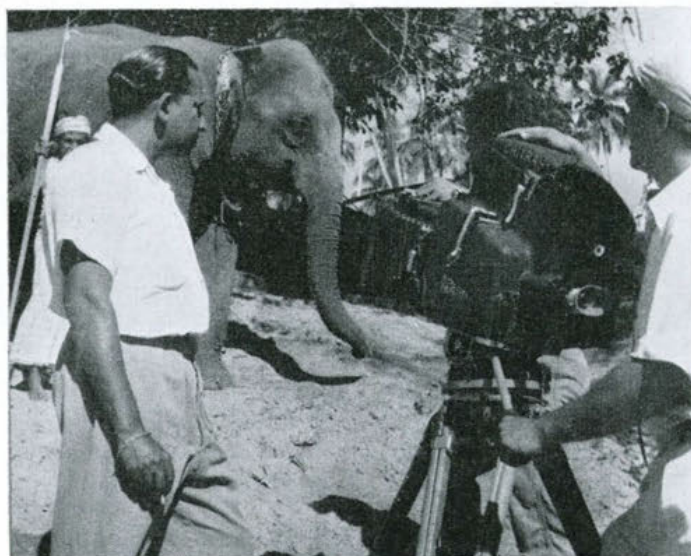
either in the style of Victorian melodrama, or heavy didactic works quite unsuitable for translation in terms of cinema. Eventually a story had to be written which not only set out to capture the surface texture of village life but also the inner tensions of village society. It set out not merely to report but to reveal. Possibly we were over-ambitious; perhaps the faults of our film can be traced to the weaknesses of our script.

The cast was entirely composed of amateurs. For the lead we chose a twelve year old village boy who had never seen a movie camera. A trolley-bus driver played the village money-lender, a woman reporter was the peasant mother struggling against poverty and the machinations of her husband; a street arab, whisked away much to his astonishment, played the cripple boy. Having completed his role, he vanished into the streets, never to be found again.

To capture the feel and rhythm of village life I moved the entire technical crew into the village itself. Here for six months we lived with the people, trying to share as much of their lives as was possible for us city-dwellers. During the shooting, one incident was most significant. A great drought (like the one in our story) struck the village, bringing in its wake an epidemic of chicken-pox. One by one our technicians were stricken. In the village all the old superstitions rose to the surface. The village elders whispered that this was a visitation from the gods for letting these "evil film people" mess around: and our story of fear and superstition, we discovered, was being played out in real life as well.

The making of *Rekava* followed the usual pattern: endless frustrations and delays; lack of finance, outmoded equipment, the absence of proper laboratory and studio facilities. This litany of woe may be so common as to be boring to the Westerner. But to the film-maker in Ceylon, each problem can slide into disaster, each set-back prove a nightmare.

After fifteen months, *Rekava* was completed and released. It created a great critical stir, both in Ceylon and India. It was written about, discussed, attacked and abused. Some felt it should never be exported because it exposed the poverty of the peasant. It won three national awards and failed at the box-office. Will we make another film? We must. Otherwise *Rekava* will be an isolated freak, apart from the main stream of Ceylon film-making. Perhaps it is not too much to say that on the success of *Rekava* in Europe may depend the fate and future of the Sinhalese cinema.



Lester Peries (left) on location.



Guitry at the time of filming "Napoléon".

Sacha Guitry

WITH Sacha Guitry, who died on July 24 at the age of seventy-two, after a long illness, there passed one of the last, if not the most brilliant, representatives of that "vie parisienne" celebrated by Offenbach. Undisputed master of the Boulevard Theatre, Guitry inherited from the *Belle Époque* its taste for luxury, its insolence and extravagance, as well as an amorality as simple as it was total. 124 plays bear witness to the prodigality of a talent which moved easily from the complexities of love and adultery to the exaltation of science (Pasteur), the arts (Mozart) and literature (La Fontaine).

Last season Paris was somewhat startled to rediscover the extraordinary freshness of Guitry's best work, when his *Faisons un Rêve* was revived with Robert Lamoureux and Danielle Darrieux. Despite the absence of the author, who created the leading rôles in most of his plays, the work seemed wholly undated and displayed his extreme skill at discovering humour in triviality. Written in 1912, in a couple of days, the play was brought to the screen in 1936 by its author, with

Raimu, Guitry and Jacqueline Delubac, one of the master's five wives, in the leading parts. A classic exercise in the husband-wife-lover triangle so dear to the French theatre, it contains the superb moment when the lover, having just seduced his best friend's wife, replies to the latter, who is already dreaming of an eternal love, "For ever? No, much longer! Two days!"

Guitry's first great screen success, though, came with another film made at about the same time. This was *Le Roman d'un Tricheur*, remembered for its use of a narrative monologue developed as a witty counterpoint to the action. Of his considerable screen output, amounting in all to about thirty films, one remembers not so much the grandiose historical confections (*Si Versailles m'était Conté*, *Napoléon*) as the bourgeois tragi-comedies in which he gave free rein to a merciless talent for observation. (Guitry was, incidentally, a great admirer of Octave Mirbeau and Jules Renard, whom he had known in his youth.) After the Liberation, Guitry suffered an eclipse. He was accused of having acted for the Germans, spent two months in prison, and was further a victim of that malice and ill-feeling so often encountered in the theatre.

After 1947, however, Guitry set about recapturing his public and did so with the two big historical films already mentioned. *Versailles*, first introduced to the French public through the radio, ran for months and was the top box-office film of its year in France. Eighteen months later, his *Napoléon* was given a spectacular première at the Opera, in the presence of the President of the Republic. Guitry himself, paralysed in the legs, was carried to the performance in an arm chair. On his death, with one or two rare exceptions, the entire Paris press paid tribute to an artist who had entertained generations of Frenchmen.

Too complex a personality to sum up easily in a few sentences, Guitry brought to the cinema some rare personal qualities: invention and wit, great culture, and a brilliant gift for words. He made his films as he conceived them, shooting them "straight", with all the devices of cutting already worked out at the script stage. But to him, in any case, the cinema was mainly a kind of larger theatre, permitting an infinite variety of scenic construction. During rehearsals, having given his actors their final instructions, he would often close his eyes so that he could concentrate his attention exclusively on their rendering of his text.

During the last few years, apart from his historical pictures, Guitry rediscovered, in *La Poison* and *Assassins et Voleurs*, an almost diabolic aptitude for describing thieves and rogues. He approached villainy with relish, deliberation and a characteristically macabre humour, hurling by the way a few darts at an immoral and cynical society. As an observer of human behaviour, he was ruthless and disillusioned, a confirmed enemy of the high-sounding, empty phrase. With greater penetration and discrimination in his approach to character, and rather more firmness in his choice of material, Sacha Guitry might well, one feels, have had his place among the cinema's truly creative talents.

But he was perhaps a victim of his own facility—the ease with which he could manipulate language and dramatic intrigue. He loved art and beautiful women; he was a tireless worker; he could even, when he felt like it, be a moralist. He will probably hold his place in the years to come—a minor place though by no means a negligible one—not among the creative artists but among the great entertainers of the theatre and cinema. He had, in the highest degree, wit; and in France this covers a multitude of sins. In a recent interview, published after his death, Guitry defined his own attitude to the cinema: "It does not have to pose social problems. It is a magic lantern. Irony and grace should not be excluded from it". Among his own favourite films, he included *Le Corbeau* and *Kind Hearts and Coronets*.

LOUIS MARCORELLES

Book Reviews

THE LION'S SHARE: the story of an entertainment empire. By Bosley Crowther. Illustrated. (E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, \$5.00)

WHATEVER HAPPENS TO Hollywood in the next few years, it is certain that no single film company will ever again seem as rich, as powerful and as unshakeable as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in its expansive years. It was the only American film company to pay a dividend throughout the depression. Its solid supports were the financial strategy of the men who managed Loew's Incorporated in New York; the resources of the Culver City studio; a star roster which went some way towards justifying the grandiloquent boast "more stars than there are in the heavens"; and the driving personality of a brilliant production executive, Irving Thalberg. Now the organisation is shaken by boardroom warfare, the film factory's resources bring with them damaging production overheads, the stars are forming their own companies, and the man who was to be "the new Thalberg", Dore Schary, has left the studio. However one analyses the present problems, which are more or less those of Hollywood as a whole, one might do worse than look at something written by Thalberg twenty-four years ago:

To continue the present destructive policy of rushing out pictures poorly made, of destroying stars by robbing them of their glamour and ability to give distinguished performances, of bewildering the best creative efforts of the best writers through forcing them to work on silly material and rushing them on good material, of loading down good pictures with the production costs of pictures which nobody wants to see—to continue any such suicidal policy is to continue giving the one inescapable answer to the question of why pictures cost so much and to invite a condition of public apathy in which there won't be any pictures at all.

This criticism of the Hollywood factory came from the most remarkable man in M.G.M.'s history, and one of the most difficult, it seems, for the writer to come to terms with. "There is no way of telling", writes Bosley Crowther in his history of M.G.M., "how much the lasting cult of Thalberg is a compound of genuine admiration for what he was and what he did, or a wistful, almost pitiful manifestation of the community's hunger for comforting symbols of its own worth". What Thalberg did is clear enough: he was behind films like *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *A Night at the Opera*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Good Earth*; he was interested in big stars, big pictures and big money; he was a perfectionist of whom it was said that "Thalberg doesn't make pictures, he remakes them". Hollywood admires him for a particular gift: he steered talent brilliantly towards a succession of box-office triumphs. But the question of whether he was also an artist, and if so, what kind of an artist, is something that writers about Hollywood, including Mr. Crowther, seem reluctant to discuss. The young genius who was running a studio at 21, died at 37, and only once in his career put his own name on a picture, has become one of Hollywood's necessary legends. Like most legends, he never comes quite clearly into focus.

M.G.M.'s other legendary figure is of course Louis B. Mayer, of whom Mr. Crowther writes with something of the awed and admiring perplexity that we encountered in Lillian Ross's *Picture*. His devotion to the American home and mother, and among his studio's output to the Andy Hardy series, is already celebrated. *The Lion's Share* also records, of his early days, that "... in heated encounters with directors and stars he would be overcome with emotion and go off into fainting spells. In such crises, his loyal secretary, Florence Browning, would casually dash cold water into his face and he would come to muttering 'Where am I?' after sufficient pause for alarm".

Mr. Crowther's history of the studio peripatetically covers a good deal of ground. He recalls Trotsky's appearance as an extra

in a Metro production; and William Saroyan's scarcely less brief career as a producer, when "he insisted on a grand piano in his office and spent much time in the projection room; it was later discovered that he was viewing all the old pictures he had missed over the years". He records Greer Garson's irate description of herself, after *Mrs. Miniver* and *Valley of Decision*, as "Metro's Glorified Mama". He also explains the original intention of the M.G.M. motto, "Ars Gratia Artis" should be interpreted, it seems, as "Art is Beholden to the Artists".

The most interesting sections of an uneven book are those in which Mr. Crowther traces the financial history of M.G.M. and Loew's Incorporated. Marcus Loew, the cautious fur salesman who built up his theatre chain out of the penny arcades and nickelodeons, his successor Nicholas Schenck, who came from the world of side-shows and roller-coasters, ultimately exercised greater authority than anyone in Hollywood. There are few more curious episodes in the financial power politics of the American industry than the story of how the rulers of M.G.M. nearly let their empire pass to the equally remarkable William Fox.

The Lion's Share deals mainly in events and personalities. Somewhat unexpectedly, it is almost wholly uncritical, or critical only in terms of box-office achievement. "There are many nice and sentimental reasons for remembering *The Wizard of Oz* ... one of the nicest is the thought of the pleasure it gave the British in the autumn of 1939 when they were waiting in anxious trepidation for the Nazis to strike", is a fairly typical comment. As a tribute, it is spoilt only by the fact that *The Wizard of Oz* was not shown in Britain until 1940. Comments on *The Thin Man* ("unforgettably amusing") and *Mrs. Miniver* ("one of the great inspirational dramas of World War Two") show Mr. Crowther's allegiance to the immediate, noncommittal cliché. From a critic of his considerable standing, this is as surprising as the occasional extreme clumsiness of the writing. In a comment on acting, he reaches fine heights of tongue-twisting solemnity: "The thing which the actor or actress represents to the audience ... actually accounts for much of a picture's consequence. These qualities of the performer, these personality elements which emanate, are sometimes difficult to fathom, to anticipate or analyse. But they go to make up the sum and substance of the dramatic vibrance of a film". It seems a pity that the personality elements emanating from Mr. Crowther's book should do so little for its dramatic vibrance.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

JEAN VIGO, by P. E. Salès Gomès. Illustrated. (Collection Cinémathèque, Editions du Seuil. Paris frs. 800.)

THIS STUDY OF Jean Vigo by the Brazilian critic P. E. Salès Gomès, originally scheduled for publication by Editions Arcanes in 1953, has finally appeared in the same collection as the French edition of Marie Seton's *Eisenstein*.

There are certain films that for reasons of director, star or genre can assume in some minds, for better or worse, the proportions of an obsession or cult. Salès Gomès has obviously (and "for better") made for himself a cult of Vigo. The blurb speaks of him as being "méthodique comme un égyptologue, méfiant comme un détective"; a detective who has the inventiveness and personality of a Sherlock Holmes plus the equipment of an up-to-date Scotland Yard. His inquiries have taken him to Vigo's relations, friends, actors, as well as to innumerable sessions in cinemas and cine-clubs.

Salès Gomès displays the results of his detection on a chronological thread, which he extends to the results of the revival of *Zéro de Conduite* in 1945. He begins with an account of Vigo's father, Eugene Bonaventure de Vigo, better known to political history as the legendary anarchist Almereyda, an exotic figure whose early revolutionary "purism" was overshadowed it seems in later years, when he apparently succumbed, at least as far as automobiles and mistresses were concerned, to the siren song of the world. Vigo's mother, Emmy Cléro, was an anarchist "companion". Almereyda died, or more probably was murdered, in the prison of Fresnes when Jean was twelve years old.

This extraordinary father, his anarchism and his legend, haunted Vigo and influenced him profoundly: in his teens he made the reburnishing of his father's tarnished aura the main point of his own existence. This account of the early period of Vigo's life also provides a pocket history of French anarchism at the beginning of the twentieth century; and from it one gets the impression that Vigo's was an improvised childhood, passed in a series of anarcho-political gypsy camps.

Salès Gomès's necessarily biographical approach to Vigo's early

years broadens out, as his subject's interest in the cinema appeared and grew, to include "biographies" and critiques of his films: *A Propos de Nice* (financed largely through his father-in-law); *Taris*, a short about the swimming champion made for Gaumont's *Journal Vivant*; long sections on *Zéro de Conduite* (a form of this chapter, written with Henri Storck, appeared in the *Pelican Cinema 1951*), and *L'Atalante*.

He also gives an account of Vigo's proposed scenario for another short to appear in the *Journal Vivant*. This was to have centred on the tennis champion Cochet and also to have made extensive use of children, so giving opportunities for flashes of the personal mythology associated with the later *Zéro de Conduite*. At the last moment, however, Gaumont abandoned the idea. This is one example from the various scenarios and projects that Vigo conceived; but of them only the four named above were put on celluloid, and allowed to drift like cargo from a movie dreamboat to be picked up and treasured twenty years after its wreck. One somehow feels that, despite the devotion of his friends and his wife Lydou, not only Vigo's childhood but his whole life was a sort of improvisation; that the films he did make were dragged from a shifting sand of illness, poverty and lack of understanding by some sleight of hand on the part of the Tenth Muse.

Although celluloid is a notably fragile medium on which to rest one's chance of immortality, although *Zéro de Conduite* was banned for fifteen years and *L'Atalante*, as its maker lay dying, was hacked about and injected with a dreary ballad by Bixio, *Chaland qui Passe*, Vigo's legend has survived, has perhaps been enhanced by these hazards.

A few years after the 1945 revival, it was still possible to write of Vigo: "Extremely little is known of his life". All that can be known has now been sought out, put into a scholarly setting and illumined with stills and exceedingly atmospheric and nostalgic photographs. Though accounts of individual reactions to his films may still be written, Salès Gomès has produced the definitive guidebook to Vigo's work and legend.

ROY EDWARDS

NOTES OF A SOVIET ACTOR, by Nicolai Cherkassov. Illustrated. (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957. 8s. 0d.)

THROUGH HIS ROLES of Alexander Nevsky, Ivan the Terrible and Professor Polezhayev (*Baltic Deputy*), Nicolai Cherkassov has become the first and only Soviet actor to be well known to English and American audiences; and we may soon see his celebrated Don Quixote, a role which he had interpreted four times on the stage (the first in 1926, at eighteen) before playing in Kozintzev's film.

His reminiscences, first published in Russian in 1953, are, as the title says, essentially those of a Soviet actor. Throughout Cherkassov betrays his dedication to socialist realism. For him the character in *They Knew Mayakovsky*, who says to the poet: "You're too concerned about politics, propaganda, public education, the fight for peace and other such highly patriotic stuff. . . . These things have nothing in common with poetry", is nothing but a "foul beast". In Cherkassov we discover the extreme commitment of the Soviet artist; but there are still hints of a highly individual and sometimes prejudiced artist underneath. His violent regret for his days of formalism with the Experimental Ensemble sometimes sounds as if he is more eager to convince himself than his readers. He has a real pro's distaste for the non-professional actor. Despite his glowing tributes, one senses that he didn't really like working with Eisenstein, who made such exacting demands and who—tired of Cherkassov's criticisms—stopped showing him the rushes of *Ivan*.

Cherkassov's accounts of studio life are naïve; but he sometimes makes shrewd comments on the actor's art, from the view-point of a disciple of Stanislavsky. His opinion of the relative importance of inner content ("what to play") and outer form ("how to play") in theatre and cinema are especially interesting. There are lighter touches too: the description of Chaliapin (Cherkassov's great hero) "reclining on a sofa . . . in knee-high white felt boots . . . a well-fitting fluffy blue sweater . . . a diamond-studded pin in his tie"; the revelation that Cherkassov is inclined to stammer, and that he worked throughout an entire night trying to produce tears for one shot in *Baltic Deputy*. Such tit-bits, and the insight the book gives you into the attitude of an artist in the U.S.S.R. make *Notes of a Soviet Actor* well worth reading—even though it does little to explain Cherkassov's extraordinary gifts as one of the greatest actors of the cinema.

DAVID ROBINSON



Jean Vigo on the set.

THE SIMPLE ART OF MAKING FILMS, by Tony Rose. Illustrated. (Focal Press, 25s.)

"THIS BOOK IS written . . . for the amateur who starts from scratch with his camera and sense of adventure both in mint condition", says Tony Rose, writer and director of some of the most enterprising British amateur films. But the arrangement, approach and even the title of *The Simple Art of Making Films* suggest some uncertainty of purpose. Opening with a daunting explanation of the cine camera and projector mechanism, the book continues through 'The First Movie Shot'; 'Planning and Shooting a Sequence'; 'Editing a Sequence'; 'The Cutting Bench' and 'Titling', and only reaches 'Subjects and Treatment' and 'Scripting a Film' after chapters on 'Filming Indoors' and 'Special Effects'. 'Direction' is reserved for the last chapter of all.

The cart not infrequently appears before the horse within the chapters, too, with loosely connected details somewhat arbitrarily bracketed together. The earlier chapters, clearly intended for the novice more concerned with family and holiday films than fiction productions, are sometimes inclined to presuppose knowledge that he may not possess. But the admirable final chapters, written with considerably more enthusiasm, are aimed at the cine club unit with unlimited ambition, and are unlikely to appeal to the same reader. This attempt to cater for all groups within the heterogeneous cine movement could only succeed if it deliberately led the reader from one level of enterprise to the next.

Informative and sound in all that it covers, the book is nevertheless oddly cursory in its attention to photographic problems, particularly on exterior shooting. The more technical chapters, some of which are contributed by other authors, have rather desperate efforts at lightheartedness in the stodgier sections. This facetiousness happily vanishes, however, when the writer becomes genuinely absorbed in his subject, as in the sections on scriptwriting, production planning and direction, where he gives excellent practical examples from his own experience.

The first two-thirds of the book convey little of the pleasure that filming brings both as a hobby and on a more ambitious plane, and it thus lacks the stimulation of a really satisfactory introduction to cine work. Nor does it pretend to be a complete guide to all production problems. But its clear and practical approach, and the soundness of Rose's advice, make this a valuable addition to the instructional books available.

DEREK HILL

Television

COMMERCIAL AIMS

ON his last day as Chairman of ITA, Sir Kenneth Clark, admitting with startling frankness that the worst ITV programmes are 'rather foolish and rather vulgar', warned that independent television 'must not be allowed to drift on the tide of popular preference'. For the present, however, commercial television is likely to be ruled by commercial considerations. The programme planners are no fools, and neither are the advertising agents who spend large sums of their clients' money on television advertising—which, after two years, can no longer be 'an act of faith'. The interests of planners and advertisers are best served by an identity of attack, with both aiming at the same audience. When it is sometimes difficult to estimate, from the programmes themselves, just where, or how low, the planners are aiming, it seems reasonable to seek a little guidance from the advertisers, and to try to assess from a rapid survey the nature of the public to which they think they can most profitably appeal.

Between seven and midnight on a recent, typical Saturday evening, ITV (London area) put out 86 commercials, advertising 78 products. This figure is in itself remarkable; numerically it represents something like three or four times the amount of advertising carried by a national daily, twice the amount carried weekly by the *Radio Times*. In kind, too, it differs notably. Some of the major press advertisers—pools promoters for instance—are unable to use television; while it seems reasonable enough that manufacturers of radio and television equipment should not preach to the (presumably) converted. But other kinds of advertisers make surprisingly little use of television. Newspaper advertisement is concerned very largely with home-making—carpets, furniture, linen, kitchen equipment—and with clothing; only three of the 86 commercials viewed dealt with such products. Even food is mostly less advertised on television, except for processed cheese and sea-foods and coffee-flavoured beverages. With cigarettes and alcohol, sweets, chocolates and household washing products, press and television draw equal.

But television comes into its own in the field of goods for solely personal use; and of these the out-and-out winners are beauty and toilet preparations and medicines. Of the 86 commercials viewed, 20 were for toilet preparations, ranging from shampoos (five varieties) to deodorants (two). Of the medicines, five were for indigestion, four were proprietary brands of aspirin and the others were tonics (two), antiseptic and an acne ointment. The most notable omission among the television commercials was the class of advertising which may be loosely called literary or educational, and which takes up a surprisingly large newspaper space. Throughout Saturday evening, only one commercial referred to the ability to read or write; and that was for *TV Times*—'to make the most of your Televiewing'.

Apart from the minority which make a purely formal statement of trade-name and price, and those which provide a more or less relevant entertainment (cartoon or song-and-dance), the appeal of television commercials is startlingly consistent. On the whole the attack is blatantly aimed at the lust for greater enjoyment of life at a purely physical and sensational level. The principal emphasis is, inevitably, on sex. The toilet preparations and a good many of the medicines and foods claim to increase your sexual attraction; 'Be sure of admiration wherever you go'. An extension of this is the possibility of being more popular. Serve really good coffee (Nescafé, for instance); smoke the cigarettes that are always in demand (Woodbines). The whole aim of getting rid of your indigestion and rheumatism and headaches and nerves and colds and spots is to Get More Out of Life; and you can get still more if you use the patent washers which get clothes and windows cleaner EASIER. But having made yourself more healthy and

beautiful and leisured, the only positive gifts life can offer—the More to Be Got Out of Life—can only be measured in terms of excitement and sensation. Foods that are not taken for health and beauty are enjoyed for 'the NEW taste sensation' and 'You'll be THRILLED with Norway Sild'. Only six commercials pointed to brief distractions from this self-centring and narrow pursuit of sedentary comforts. Three motor fuel commercials and an official road safety warning hinted at a slightly more active form of sensation. A group of hotels flaunted the glamour and chic they could offer the enterprising holiday-maker; Arthur Murray offered dancing lessons—for extra interest and health. And that was all.

Of course it would be foolish to try to draw any firm conclusion from this; but the assumptions into which one is forced about the advertisers' view of their public are not encouraging. Eighty-six advertisements are exclusively aimed at people apparently trapped into purely passive receptivity, their only positive demands being the titillation of novelties to spur the tedium along, the only active interests offered them, driving a car or learning to dance. It would be absurd to take this as a real index to the audience; Saturday night viewers must include a vast number who still read books or breed dogs or collect butterflies or study old Norse. But for the moment the advertisers do not seem to regard them. And while advertising will still be equated with programme content, we must regard with some fear the insidious suggestion of the commercials that ITV's audience has been suffocated into a dead, tele-glazed, un-social passivity.

DAVID ROBINSON

Correspondence

Cut Copies

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND,

Sir,—Thank you for your thoughtful and all-inclusive editorial on the practice of cutting films. It is extremely intelligent in stating the causes for this barbaric practice, too.

For the record, allow me to list some of the films that I have seen recently on theatre screens with the approximate length of missing sections. From Stroheim: *Greed* (31 reels), *Foolish Wives* (13 reels), *The Merry Widow* (2 reels), and *Merry-Go-Round* (2 reels). From Lang: *Dr. Mabuse, Der Spieler* (9 reels), *The Nibelungen Saga* (1½ reels), *Metropolis* (2 reels), *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (2 reels). From Pabst: *The Joyless Street* (2 reels), *Secrets of a Soul* (several scenes), *Diary of a Lost Girl* (many scenes), *Die Dreigroschenoper* (2 reels), *Kameradschaft* (½ reel). From Eisenstein: *Potemkin* (½ reel), *Alexander Nevsky* (1 reel), *October* (3 reels). From Pudovkin: *Storm Over Asia* (1 reel), *The End of St. Petersburg* (½ reel). From Ford: *The Long Voyage Home* (2 reels), *The Sun Shines Bright* (2½ reels). From Chaplin: *City Lights* (one scene), *The Kid* (ending scenes). From Milestone: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (5 reels), *Hallelujah, I'm a Bum* (1½ reels). From Duvivier: *David Golder* (5-8 reels), *Un Carnet de Bal* (3 reels).

Others include: *Member of the Wedding* (3 reels), *Lost Horizon* (4 reels), *King of Kings* (9 reels), *A Nous La Liberté* (½ reel), *Earth* (½ reel), *The Wages of Fear* (5 reels), *Children of Paradise* (8 reels), *The Rules of the Game* (2½ reels), *A Star is Born* (5 reels), *The Life of Emile Zola* (3 reels), *Ecstasy* (3 reels), *The Diary of a Country Priest* (3 reels), *The Red Badge of Courage* (2 reels), *Blue Angel* (½ reel), *Variety* (2 reels), *Gosta Berling's Saga* (4-6 reels), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (½ reel), *Seven Samurai* (3 reels), *Secret People* (2 reels).

Deletions of episodes from omnibus films include two apiece from De Sica's *The Gold of Naples*, *Dead of Night* and *If I Had A Million*.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES SHIBUK

2084 Bronx Park East,
Bronx 62,
New York.

"Opinionated Nonsense"

Sir,—The fact that John Berger's article "Look at Britain" in your Summer issue is rubbish, is made the more irritating because it is an extremist development of the generalised political drift towards the Left which has been noticeable recently in SIGHT AND SOUND. The signed articles have tended more and more to be (a) politically Leftist and (b) open about it. The magazine increasingly resembles a rather nasty hangover from the misguided politics of the Thirties and Forties.

More considered and detailed writing about Film is what the magazine should be publishing and less of the kind of irrelevantly opinionated nonsense perpetrated by Anderson, Robinson and Berger, to mention only the most recent examples.

Mr. Robinson, for example, in cataloguing the mood of contemporary Britain, ignores a large number of things (like the Conservative Government, the academic and undergraduate drift towards the Right, the prevalence of intellectual fascism, the success of the *Sunday Times*) which, if he had included them, would have diluted the pink wash he painted, a good deal.

Mr. Berger produces plonkily the following: "imagination means the ability to disclose that which exists", thereby equating 'detective' with 'artist'. Someone should point out to Mr. Berger that disclosing a cesspool is not normally regarded as an act of creative imagination. "The middle-class nature of the monarchy, the present 'safeness' of English life . . . a memory of what a London broadcast could mean to clandestine listeners during the war", then, "Anderson does not, of course, expound these points". Then what the hell has all this rhapsodising got to do with a perfectly unremarkable documentary called *Every Day Except Christmas*? "He simply acknowledges them. . . ." What does this mean? (I suspect, nothing.) What relevance has the word 'acknowledge' to any artistic creator? If a director of a film about the last war acknowledges that Fascism was a Good Thing that does not affect the aesthetic quality of his work. This is not criticism, it is sheer waffle.

I think the tendency is as usual due to those intellectuals who are 'committed' to back-numbers like 'the People', 'Democracy', 'Humanism' and 'Life'. These people are afraid of the political consequences of aesthetic ivory-towerism. By now, though, even the contributors to SIGHT AND SOUND must be ready to admit that a film by Bresson or Bunuel gives about as much to and takes about as much from 'the People' as does a Henry Moore to the idiot who gets snapped with his face grinning through one of the holes.

Yours faithfully,

23 Onslow Gardens, S.W.7.

IAN C. JARVIE.

Censorship

Sir,—As an American screenwriter happily working in Britain, I am aware of the advantages of having an officially recognised, and therefore recognisable body of film censors. Consequently, I am usually disinclined to quarrel with the rulings of that office. But the case of *The Bachelor Party* rouses me to protest.

This film is just about as wholesome as brown bread and much more entertaining. The treatment is frank and adult, but from any moral point of view would seem to be unexceptionable. Yet *The Bachelor Party* suffers the economic handicap of an 'X' Certificate, while *The Sweet Smell of Success*, for striking example, has the benefit of an 'A' Certificate. The basis for such classification completely escapes me.

The Sweet Smell of Success, for all its surface brilliance, is morally on about the same level as *Titus Andronicus* or *The Duchess of Malfi*, without the excuse of poetry. The mainspring of the plot is incest. The incidental delights include a demonstration of sadistic and corrupt police methods, an attempted suicide and its frustration in a pretty little wrestling match between the villain of the piece and the young heroine, whose wardrobe seems to consist of nothing but a mink coat and a nightgown, the planting of marihuana-filled cigarettes on an innocent man, and the procuring of a nymphomaniac blonde.

No one, however addicted to freedom of thought and expression, could complain or be surprised if the censors had seen fit to issue *The Sweet Smell of Success* an 'X' Certificate. And I do not doubt that some technical justification may be found for restricting the showing of *The Bachelor Party*. But any writer, like myself, who is required to fathom the intentions and purposes of the British Board of Film Censors, must be bewildered and dismayed by the judgment passed on these two films.

Yours faithfully,

39 Smith Street, S.W.3.

JOHN HUNTER.

A Distinguished List

Sir,—In a leaflet issued by the British Film Institute to advertise the programme for the Gala Opening of the National Film Theatre, the following words appear:—

The Theatre has succeeded in gaining a considerable international reputation, being unique of its kind in the world and the ambassadors of many countries have attended performances during seasons of their countries' films. Among the distinguished film-makers who have visited the Theatre since its inception have been Erich von Stroheim, Vittorio de Sica, René Clair, Grigori Alexandrov, Carl Dreyer, Federico Fellini, Luis Bunuel, Robert Bresson and Joan Crawford.

May I suggest that this remarkable commendation deserves to be recorded for a wider public in the pages of SIGHT AND SOUND?

Yours faithfully,

57 Greencroft Gardens,
N.W.6.

LINDSAY ANDERSON.

Lola Montès

Sir,—This is not a complaint or a correction. But I must say that my admiration for SIGHT AND SOUND is too great to allow the slightest error. Only to those one has given implicit trust can nothing be forgiven.

On page 49 of your last issue (Summer 1957) you publish a beautiful tribute to Max Ophuls, who died recently. This tribute is accompanied by a photograph taken during the production of *Lola Montès* with the following caption: "Max Ophuls, with Maria Felix, on the set of *Lola Montès*".

May I remind you (as you certainly knew already) that Maria Felix was not among the cast of this film. No doubt, Martine Carol's dark hair has misled you. But let us give Martine Carol her due, in this case the honour of having been directed by the great Ophuls in a film which will remain a milestone in the history of the cinema.

Yours faithfully,

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FROM SCREEN TO SCREEN, continued from page 64

currently being sought from the Federal Communications Commission, enables three "scrambled" programmes to be transmitted by wire from the studio to the subscriber's set. By inserting the right amount in a coin-box the subscriber can select and "unscramble" the programme he wants. The device includes an arrangement for dealing with the situation if the subscriber does not have the correct change, and a loudspeaker attachment announces available programmes and prices.

Telemeter no doubt has its snags, but it is apparent that it could have an important effect on the showing of films on television. If a producer could reckon to recoup his costs by a single showing on this subscription system, his dependence on the cinema exhibitor would virtually disappear. The present position might be reversed. Television would show the latest films and the cinema would be the place where old films were revived!

Personally I have had doubts as to whether telemeter would be established in this country, but in a speech at the last C.E.A. Conference, Mr. John Davis, managing director of the Rank Organisation, said that coin-in-the-slot television "will certainly come". If Mr. Davis says so, then no doubt it will, and we can look forward to the day when we have our own private box-office in our sitting-room and the latest Rank production on our screen. Until then, however, we shall have to make do with some not-so-good A pictures, some good B pictures, some others, and an occasional Bank Holiday treat.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stills

TOEI FILM for *Man of the Ricefields*, *The Story of the Swan*.
RANK for *The Sea Wall*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Paths of Glory*, *Sweet Smell of Success*.
EALING FILMS for *Barnacle Bill*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *The Maltese Falcon*, *The James Dean Story*.
INTERNATIONAL FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Les Belles de Nuit*.
NEW REALM for *On Our Merry Way*.
NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA for *City of Gold*.
RIZZOLI-PALLAVICI for *I Sogni nel Cassetto*.
RAJ KAPOOR for *Jagte Raho*.
HUNGAROFILM for *Professor Hannibal*.
B.P. for *The New Explorers*.
B.B.C. for *In Prison*.
REALIST FILM UNIT for *Waters of Time*.
BASIC FILMS for *Continuous Observation*.
WORLD WIDE and MORSE FILMS for *Thursday's Children*.
ARCHWAY for *A King in New York*.
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART FILM LIBRARY, TOKIO for *Souls on the Road*, *I Was Born But . . .*, *Humanity and Paper Balloons*.
Sisters of the Gion, *Five Scouts*, *Crossways*.
BRITISH LION for *Gate of Hell*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Young Lions*.
FILMS DE FRANCE for *Les Sorcières de Salem*.
A.B.-PATHE for *Woman in a Dressing Gown*.
REGENT FILMS for *Mitsou*.
LESTER PERIES for *Rekava*.
ASSOCIATED TELEVISION for *The Adventures of Aggie*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Storm in a Teacup*, *Enough to Eat*, *The Gold Rush*, *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, portraits of James Whale and Jean Vigo.
PHOTO GAUMONT DISTRIBUTION for portrait of Sacha Guitry.

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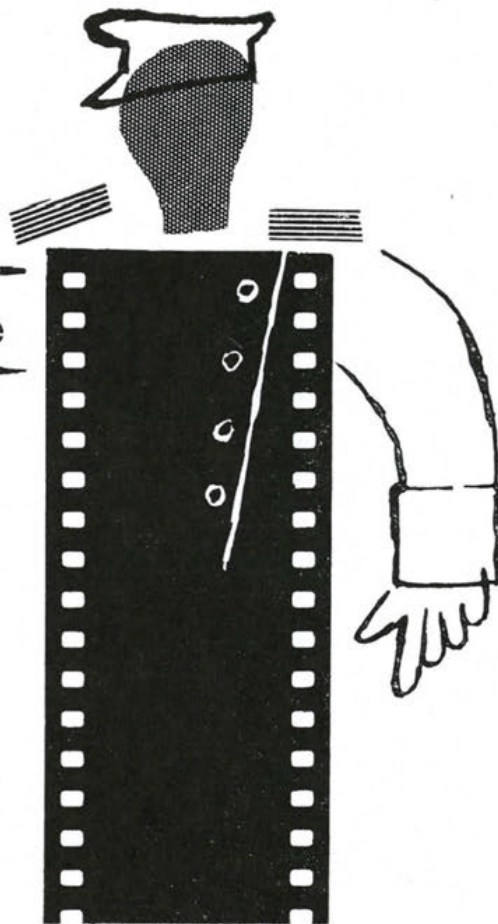
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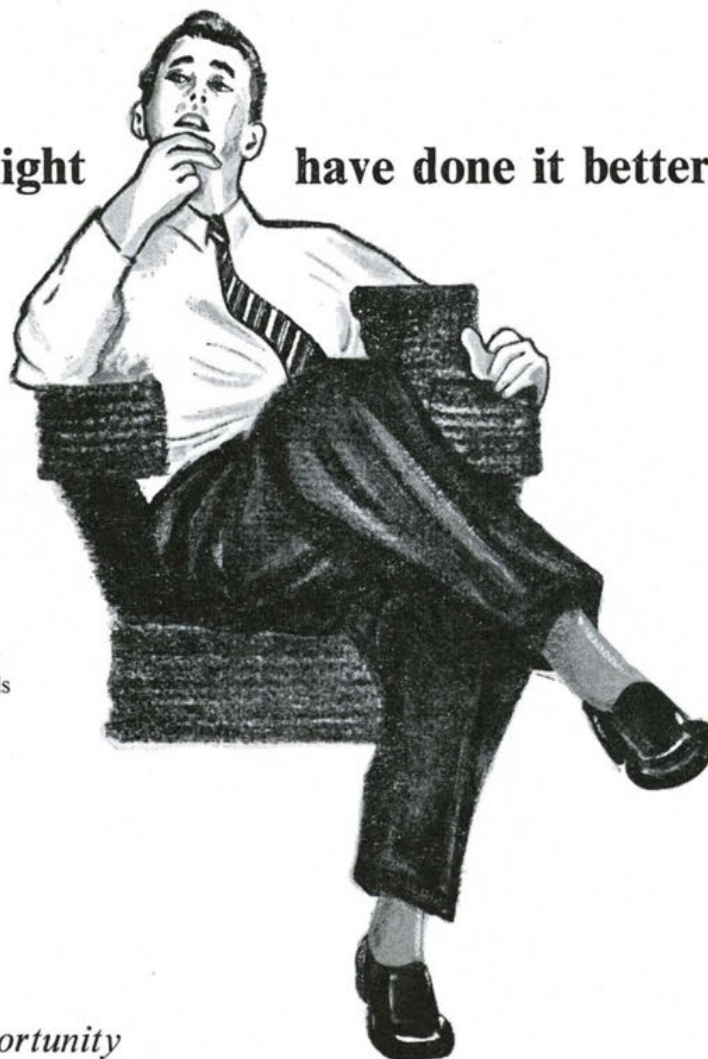
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PRACTICAL WORK: Planning Production; Direction; Art Direction (Designing and Making Sets); Photography; Camera Handling; Lighting; Special Effects; Models; Sound Recording; Editing; Titling; Projection; and other work necessary to film production.

GENERAL THEORY: Structure of Film Production; Economics, Administration and Management in Film Studios; History of Film; Analysis of Entertainment, Documentary and

Educational Film Principles; Films and the Public; Censorship.

PERSONNEL OF FILM PRODUCTION: Producer; Director; Art Director; Director of Photography; Camera Crew; Sound Technician; Editor; Continuity Clerk; Script Writer; Production Supervisor; Property Master; Chief Electrician; Casting Office; Make-up Department and the various artisans.

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two or three stars.

ACTION OF THE TIGER (M-G-M) Van Johnson as the cynical but soft-hearted adventurer hero in a British schoolboy style melodrama. (Martine Carole, Herbert Lom; director, Terence Young. CinemaScope. Technicolor.)

AFFAIR TO REMEMBER, AN (Fox) Leo McCarey's first film since *My Son John* is an affectionate re-make of *Love Affair*. With a most affable performance by Cary Grant. (Deborah Kerr, Richard Denning. CinemaScope. Eastman Colour.)

***AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS (United Artists)** Mike Todd's much-publicised "show" is a film like any other—but twice as long as most. Good performances by David Niven and Cantinflas and exotic guest appearances help pass the time. (Director, Michael Anderson. Todd A-O. Eastman Colour.)

BAND OF ANGELS (Warners) Love affair between Clark Gable and a purchased slave girl (Yvonne de Carlo) is interrupted by the American Civil War. Burlesque in the *Gone With The Wind* country. (Director, Raoul Walsh. WarnerColor)

BERNARDINE (Fox) A ghost of a high school musical: love in blue jeans, but hardly a girl in sight. Janet Gaynor makes her come-back as a harassed mother. (Terry Moore, Pat Boone; director, Henry Levin. CinemaScope.)

***BOLSHOI BALLET, THE (Rank)** Paul Czinner filmed the Bolshoi Ballet when they were in London in 1956, in scenes from *Giselle* and *divertissements*. Cinematically uninteresting, but probably the most satisfactory record of the dance and of the incomparable Ulanova to date. (Eastman Colour.)

CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM (JARFID) Dirk Bogarde, with six months to live, strikes oil in the Rockies and puts paid to the vicious dam contractors. Unlikely plot; otherwise unexceptionable. (Stanley Baker, Michael Craig, Barbara Murray; director, Ralph Thomas. Eastman Colour.)

***CINERAMA HOLIDAY (Cinerama Productions)** The long-running, large-screen travelogue has its striking and effective episodes, notably skiing in Switzerland and railroading in California. (Directors, Robert Bendick, Philippe de Lacey. Technicolor.)

*****CONDAMNE A MORT S'EST ECHAPPE, UN (Films de France)** Bresson's superbly austere and concentrated account of a prisoner of war escape, and the moral tensions behind the daring exploit. An extraordinary achievement by one of the cinema's most uncompromising talents. (François Leterrier.)

DELICATE DELINQUENT, THE (Paramount) Jerry Lewis as a youngish delinquent who not only reforms, but passes his police exams. Intentions good, but the combination of zany slapstick and a social theme is not always happy. (Darren McGavin, Martha Hyer; director, Don McGuire. VistaVision.)

***END AS A MAN (Columbia)** Psychopaths and pervers in an American Military Academy. An exclusively Actors' Studio cast, with the arresting Ben Gazzara as the latest Method Boy. *Reviewed.* (Director, Jack Garfein.)

****FACE IN THE CROWD, A (Warners)** Kazan's ferocious study of the rise of a bucolic public TV hero, and his kind of success. Amazing performances by Andy Griffiths and Patricia Neal. *Reviewed.* (Director, Elia Kazan.)

FLESH IS WEAK, THE (Eros) Doubtful melodrama of London's tarts and toughs. Sprightly direction but little else. (John Derek, Milly Vitale; director, Don Chaffley.)

***FULL OF LIFE (Columbia)** Domestic trials of an impoverished writer (Richard Conte) and pregnant wife, engagingly played by Judy Holliday. An equivocal film directed with the utmost efficiency by Richard Quine.

***HATFUL OF RAIN, A (Fox)** The best of the drug addict cycle, a powerful and compelling adaptation of Michael Gazzo's play. Top-heavy plot, obsessed atmospheres; final impression specious. Eva Marie Saint and Don Murray give good performances. *Reviewed.* (Director, Fred Zinnemann. CinemaScope.)

ISLAND IN THE SUN (Fox) Zanuck's florid production of the Alec Waugh best-seller about colour and politics in the Caribbean. Tedious and talkative with a goodish performance by James Mason. (Joan Fontaine, Dorothy Dandridge; director, Robert Rossen. CinemaScope. De Luxe Colour.)

***JAMES DEAN STORY, THE (Warners)** Documentary account of the actor's brief career, scripted by Stewart Stern. Too long, but serious in intent and tactful. *Reviewed.* (Directors, George W. George and Robert Altman.)

JEANNE EAGELS (Columbia) The Broadway and Hollywood star of the 'twenties; her career in terms of drink, drugs and internal combustion. Harsh, mannered and heavily over-acted. (Kim Novak, Jeff Chandler, Agnes Moorehead; director, George Sidney.)

****KING IN NEW YORK, A (Archway)** Chaplin's long-awaited film, the story of an exiled king and his American experiences, strikes only an occasional spark. Satire at the expense of McCarthyism, TV commercials, etc., but sadly infrequent evidence of genius at work. *Reviewed.* (Dawn Addams.)

LONG HAUL, THE (Columbia) A rather unlikely attempt at British neo-realism, with Victor Mature as a misled lorry-driver and Diana Dors as his temptress. (Scenarist and director, Ken Hughes.)

LOVING YOU (Paramount) Seven songs and a lot of hip-swinging: strictly for Presley addicts. (Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Scott, Wendell Corey; director, Hal Kanter. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

***LUCKY JIM (British Lion)** Knockabout farce derived from Kingsley Amis' novel. Ian Carmichael is sometimes funny enough to make it supportable. (Sharon Acker, Terry-Thomas, Hugh Griffith; director, Charles Crichton.)

MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES (JARFID) Grimly ironic life-story of Lon Chaney, enacted by James Cagney, and with a script which tries to make it all sound on the cosy side. (James Cagney, Dorothy Malone; director, Joseph Pevney.)

MANUELA (British Lion) Implausible adaptation of William Wood's sub-Conrad novel, with well-judged but wasted performance by Trevor Howard as an alcoholic sea-captain, and an inadequate one by Elsa Martinelli as his stowaway lover. *Reviewed.* (Director, Guy Hamilton.)

***MITSOU (Regent)** The Colette mixture, but thinner than usual. Charm, pleasant Eastman Colour, notable music-hall backgrounds, unconvincing war episodes. *Reviewed.* (Danièle Delorme, Fernand Gravey; director, Jacqueline Audry.)

NIGHT PASSAGE (JARFID) Railroad western with more imagination than most, and James Stewart as laconic hero, Dan Duryea as full-blooded villain. (André Murphy; director, James Neilson. Technirama. Technicolor.)

NO TIME FOR TEARS (A.B.-Pathé) Life in a children's hospital, with probationer Sylvia Sims involved in an unhappy love affair and matron Anna Neagle romping with the young patients. Smoothly sugar-coated. (Anthony Quayle, George Baker; director, Cyril Frankel. CinemaScope; Eastman Colour.)

OMAR KHAYAM (Paramount) Long-winded Persian Nights comic strip, vaguely deriving inspiration from Dumas and Flash Gordon. (Cornel Wilde, Michael Rennie; director, William Dieterle. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

***PRINCE AND THE SHOWGIRL, THE (Warners)** Terence Rattigan's play about the brief encounter between Ruritania and the Gaiety, ably but rather heavily done. Marilyn Monroe is delightful. (Laurence Olivier, Sybil Thorndike, Jeremy Spenser; director, Laurence Olivier. Technicolor.)

***SENSO (The Wanton Countess) (Archway)** Cut and dubbed English version of Visconti's love story of an Italian countess and young Austrian officer during the Austrian occupation of Italy in 1866. Severe mutilation makes judgement difficult. *Reviewed.* (Alida Valli, Farley Granger. Technicolor.)

SEVEN THUNDERS (JARFID) Wartime escape melodrama with Stephen Boyd and Tony Wright as allied soldiers in occupied Marseilles. (Director, Hugo Fregonese.)

SILK STOCKINGS (M-G-M) Musical remake of *Ninotchka*, with Cyd Charisse as Garbo. From being a lightly ironic joke about a Russo-American encounter, it has sadly declined into a vulgar and only rarely comic anti-Soviet tirade. (Fred Astaire, Peter Lorre; director, Rouben Mamoulian. CinemaScope. Metrocolor.)

***SORCIERES DE SALEM, LES (Films de France)** Sartre's adaptation of Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* which finds a parallel between the Salem witchhunts of 1692 and McCarthyism. Yves Montand, Simone Signoret and Mylène Demongeot all perform excellently. *Reviewed.* (Director, Raymond Rouleau.)

STORY OF ESTHER COSTELLO, THE (Columbia) Adaptation of Nicholas Monsarrat's novel about a blind, deaf and dumb girl who becomes the central figure in a huge fund-raising charity racket. Slick and unlikeable, with a promising performance by Heather Sears and a rampaging one by Joan Crawford as her rich patroness. (Rossano Brazzi, Ron Randell; director, David Miller.)

***TEA AND SYMPATHY (M-G-M)** A rather emasculated version of Robert Anderson's play—itsself a thin amalgam of *Young Woodley* and *The Children's Hour*. Capable but stage-bound playing by Deborah Kerr, John Kerr and Leif Ericson from the original Broadway cast. (Director, Vincente Minnelli. CinemaScope. Metrocolor.)

VICIOUS CIRCLE. (Independent/British Lion) Smooth British crime melodrama, with John Mills as eminent medical consultant used as police bait for international crooks, and Roland Culver as a gentlemanly policeman. (Derek Farr, Noelle Middleton; director, Ralph Thomas.)

***WOMAN IN A DRESSING GOWN (A.B.-Pathé)** Serio-comic study of lower middle class domestic crisis, with husband torn between pretty secretary and slatternly wife. Interesting British try at the small-scale study of human relationships, based like its recent American counterparts on a TV play. *Reviewed.* (Yvonne Mitchell, Anthony Quayle, Sylvia Sims; director, J. Lee Thompson.)

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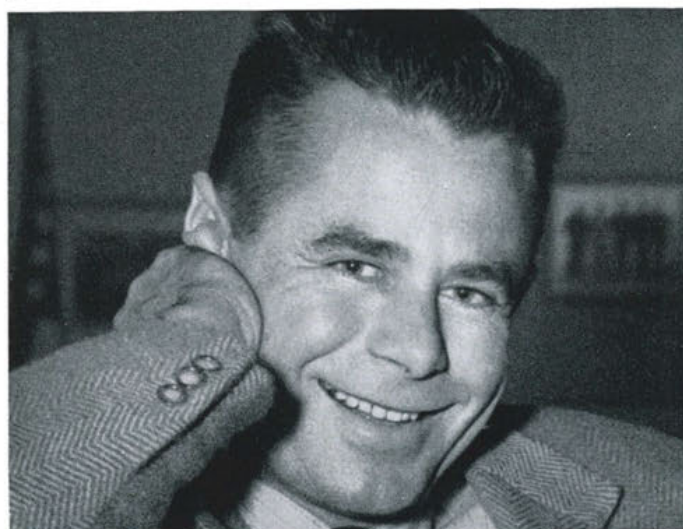
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